THE COMMON PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION

Clearly proved, and singularly improven:

Or, A

PRACTICALL CATECHISM.

WHEREIN

Some of the most concerning Foundations of our Fath are solidly laid down, and that Doctrine, which is according to Godliness, sweetly, yet pungently pressed home, and most satisfyingly handled

By that worthy and faithfull Servant of Jesus Christ Mr. *HEW BINNING*, late Minister of the Gospel at [illegible]

1 Tim. 4. 6. *If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good Minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the word of Faith, and of good Doctrine whereunto thou hast attained.*

Heb. 5. 12. *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God.*

1 Pet. 2. 2. *As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*

Joh. 17. 3. *And this is life eternall, that they might know thee the onely true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*

Glasgow, Printed by *Andrew Anderson*, for a Society of Book-sellers, ANNO DOM. 1659.

The Book-sellers to the Reader.

Reader,

WE have reason to be but too confident, that little or nothing needs be said to perswade thee that these few Sermons of worthy Mr. Gray upon Faith, which hitherto have been Printed, were imperfect, both as having many things in them amisse, unworthy of the Author, and as wanting a considerable part of what was delivered by him upon that subject: which hath put some of his reverend and judicious Brethren (who, together with the Authors reputation, have likewise consulted thy advantage) to correct that which hath been already published, and to adde other three Sermons, which the first Publisher (who while he made too much haste, according to the Proverb, cæcos peperit catulos) had not: These are now at the Presse, so that this Orphan which came abroad after its Fathers death, much disfigured, hath at last fallen into the hands of such faithfull Tutors, as have been carefull to send it abroad with all that the Father left it, having both the integrity of parts, and the beauty of proportion. We hope that henceforth thou wilt look on this only as Mr. Gray's opus posthumum, (he being much wronged, and thou abused by the former) and give it sutable entertainment. Farewell.

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To the Reader.

Christian Reader,

He holy and learned Author of this little Book, having out-run his years, hastned to a maturity before the ordinary season, in so much that ripe Summer Fruit was found with him, by the first of the Spring, for before he had lived twenty five Yeares compleat, he had got to be Philologus, Philosophus, Theologus eximius, *whereof he gave suteable proofs, by his labours, having first professed in Philosophie three years, with high approbation in the University of* Glasgow, *and thence was translated to the Ministry of the Gospel in a Congregation adjacent, where he laboured in the work of the Gospel near four years, leaving an Epistle of commendation upon the hearts of his hearers: But as few burning and shining Lights have been of long continuance here, so he, after he had served his own*

generation by the will of God, and many had rejoiced in his light for a season, was quickly transported to the Land of Promise, in the 26th. year of his age. He lived deservedly esteemed and beloved, and died much lamented, by all discerning Christians who knew him. And indeed the losse which the Churches of Christ in these parts sustained in his death, was the greater upon a double account, First, that he was a person fitted with dexterity to vindicate School Divinity, and Practicall Theologie, from the superfluity of vain and fruitlesse perplexing questions, wherewith latter times have corrupted both, and had it upon his spirit in all his way to reduce that native Gospel-simplicity, which (in most parts of the world, where literature is in esteem, and where the Gospel is Preached) is almost exiled from the School, and from the Pulpit, a specimen whereof the judicious Reader may find in this little treatise. Besides, he was a person of eminent moderation, and sobriety of spirit (a rare grace in this generation) whose heart was much drawn forth in the study of healing wayes and condescensi-

ns of love among Brethren, one who long-
d for the recovering of the Humanity of
Christianity, *which hath been well near*
ost in the bitter divisions of these times, and
he animosities which have followed there-
pon.

That which gave the rise to the publishing
f this part of his Manuscripts, was partly
he longing of many (who knew him) after
ome fruit of his labours, for the use of the
Church, and partly the exceeding great use-
fulnesse of the Treatise, wherein, I am bold
o say, that some fundamentals of the Chri-
stian Religion, and great Mysteries of Faith
are handled with the greatest Gospel-simpli-
city, and most dexterous plainnesse, and are
brought down to the meanest capacity and
vulgar understanding, with abundant evi-
dence of a great hight and reach of usefull
knowledge in the Author, who, had he
lived to have perfected the Explication of
the Grounds of Religion in this manner, as
he intended in his opening the Catechism
unto his particular Congregation, he had
been upon this single account famous in the
Churches of Christ; but now by this imper-

fect

fect opus posthumum, *thou art left to judg*
ex ungue leonem.

The Authors method was his peculi
gift, who being no stranger to the Rules o
Art, knew well how to make his Method sub
serve the matter which he handled (for th
he tell not alwayes that his discourse hath s
many parts, thou mayest not think it
wants method, it being maximum artis
celare artem) *that the same Spirit*
which inabled him to conceive, and commu-
nicate to others these sweet mysteries of Sal-
vation, may help thee with profite to read
and peruse them, is the desire of him who i

thine in the service of the Gospel,

PATRICK GILLESPIE.

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Reader,

Reader,

IT is ordinarily with Books, as it is ever with men, there is no man so perfect, but he hath his imperfections, some thing too much that thou couldest wish him to want, and somewhat wanting that thou couldest desire him to have, so in books, there is somewhat always amisse, neither is this small treatise exempted from that common lot. I shall not trouble thee in setting down what may be wrong, as to a letter or a point. Only take notice of these few following escapes which do more manifestly marre the sense, so shalt thou do thy self a favour, and put an obligation on me.

ERRATA.

Pag. 22. line 30. contrariwise *read* contrary wayes p. 24. l. 34. matters *read* matter p. 50. l. 1. o *read* of *ibid.* l. 4. dondescends *read* condescends p. 53. l. 16. asketh *read* ask *ibid.* l. 2 an *read* a p. 66 l. 18 wondering *read* wandering p. 77 l. 18 αγωγομ& *read* αγωγυμ& p. 81 l. 9 *superlusentis* read *superlucentis* p. 83 l. 31 do *read* no p. 87 l. 34 inneed *read* indeed p. 93 l. 17 cover their from us, *read* cover their feet from us p. 107 l. 7 promised *read* premised *ibid.* l. 24 secludes *read* seconds p. 111 l. 31 swim *read* sin p. 128 l. 10 reflects *read* rejects p. 139 l. 19 out which *read* out out of which p. 141 l. 19 approves *read* proves p. 157 l. 26 poor *read* pure p. 193 l. 10 so our *read* to our *ibid.* l. 16 so, immensurable *read* so immensurably p. 214 l. 1 o *read* of p. 215 l. 18 me *read* we p. 216 l. 1 all again to him *read* all to him p. 219 l. 29 that God did *read* that did p. 220 l. 22 no resemblance, *read* some resemblance p. 234 l. 31 streners *read* strangers p. 237 l. 25 impaired *read* in part repaired p. 240 l. 24 did you *read* do you p. 247 l. 28 function *read* sanction.

That Title which thou wilt find upon that Sermon which begins pag. 210. *viz.* Of the creation of man, *should have been,* Of Providence.

Of the chief End of Man.

Rom. 11. 36. *Of Him, and through Him, and for Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever.* And 1 Cor. 10. 31. *Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

ALl that men have to know may be compriſed under theſe two Heads, What their end is, and what is the right way to attain to that end: and all that we have to do, is, by any means to ſeek to compaſſe that end. Theſe are the two cardinall points of a mans knowledge and exerciſe; *Quo, & qua eundum eſt, Whither* to go, and *what way* to go. If there be a miſtake in any of theſe fundamentals, all is wrong. All arts and ſciences have their principles and grounds, that muſt be preſuppoſed to all ſolide knowledge and right practice; So hath the true Religion ſome fundamentall principles, which muſt be laid in heart, and imprinted into the ſoul, or there can be no ſuperſtructure of true and ſaving knowledge; and no practice in Chriſtianity that can lead to a bleſſed end. But as the principles are not many, but a few common and eaſy grounds, from which all the concluſions of art are deduced, ſo the Principles of true Religion are few and plain, they needed neither burden your memorie, nor confound your underſtanding, that which may ſave you *is neer hand*, ſayes the Apoſtle, Rom. 10. *in thy mouth*: it is neither too farre above us, nor too farre below us. But alace your not

 conſidering

considering of these common, and few, and easie grounds makes them both burdensome to the memorie, and darke to the understanding. As there is nothing so easie, but it becomes difficult, if you do it against your will, *nihil est tam facile, quin difficile fiat, si invitus feceris*, so there is nothing so plain, so common, but it becomes darke and hard, if you do not indeed consider it, and lay it to heart.

That which is in the first place to be considered, is, our end. As in all other arts, and every pettie businesse, it hath the first place of consideration, so especially in the Christian Religion. It is the first cause of all humane actions, and the first Principle of all deliberate motions. Except you would walk at randome, not knowing whither you go, or what you do, you must once establish this and fix it in your intention, what is the great end and purpose wherefore I am created, and sent into the world? If this be either not questioned, or not rightly constituted, you cannot but spend your time, *Vel nihil agendo, vel aliud agendo, vel male agendo*, you must either do nothing or nothing to purpose, or that which is worse, that which will undo you. It is certainly the wrong establishing of this one thing, that makes the most part of our motions, either altogether irregular, or unprofitable, or destructive and hurtfull: Therefore as this Point hath the first place in your Catechism, so it ought to be first of all laid to heart, and pondered as the one necessary thing. *One thing is needfull*, sayes Christ, *Luk* 10. 42. and if any thing be in a Superlative degree needfull, this is it. O that you would choose to consider it as the necessitie and weight of it requires.

We have read two Scriptures, which speaks to the ultimate and chief end of man, which is the glorifying of God by all our actions, and words, and thoughts: In which we have those things of importance. 1. That Gods glory is the end of our *being*. 2. That Gods glory should be the end of our doing. And 3. the ground of both these, because both being and doing are *from him*, therefore they ought to be both *for him*: He is the first cause of both

orth, and therefore he ought to be the last end of both. *of him, and through him, are all things*, and therefore all things *are also for him*, and therefore all things *should be done for him.*

God is independent altogether, and self-sufficient, this is his royall prerogative, wherein he infinitly transcends all created perfections: *he is of himself, and for himself*, from no other, and for no other, *but of him, and for him are all things.* He is the fountain head, you ought to follow all the streams up to it, and then to rest: for you can go no further. But the creature, even the most perfect work besides God, it hath these two Ingredients of *Limitation*, and *Imperfection* in its bosome: *It is from another, and for another.* It hath its rise out of the fountain of Gods Immense power and goodnesse, and it must run towards that again, till it empty all its faculties, and excellencies, into that same sea of goodnesse. Dependence is the proper notion of a created being: dependence upon that infinite Independent Being, as the first immediat cause, and the last immediat end: you see then that this principle is engraven in the very nature of man. It is as certain and evident, that man is made for Gods glory, and for no other end, as that he is from Gods power, and from no other cause: Except men did violent their own conscience, and put out their own eyes, as the Gentiles did, *Rom.* 1. 19. &c. *That which might be known* of mans chief end, *is manifest in them, so that all men are without excuse.* As God his Being is Independent, so that he cannot be expressed by any name, more suitable then such as he takes to himself: *I am that I am*, importing a boundlesse, ineffable, absolute, and transcendent being, beside which, no creature deserves so much as to have the name of being, or to be made mention of in one day with his Name; because his glorious light makes the poor derived shaddow of light in other creatures, to disappear, and to evanish out of the World of Beings: So it is, the glorious perfection of his Nature, that he doth all things for himself, for his own

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Name, *Prov.* 16. 4. and his glory is as dear to him, himself, *Isai.* 42. 8. *I am the Lord, that is my Name, and therefore my glory I will give to no other*, and 48. 11. This no ambition indeed. For a man to seek his own glory, *to search into it, is no glory*, Prov. 25. 27. but rather a man shame: Self-seeking in creatures, is a monstrous and in congruous thing; it is as absurd, and unbeseeming a creature, to seek its own glory, as to attribute to it self its own being. Shall the thing formed say to the Potter, *thou hast not made me*, that were ridiculous; and shall the thing formed say, *its made for it self*, that were as ridiculous. Self-deniall is the ornament and beauty of a creature, and therefore humility is an ornament and cloathing, 1 *Pet.* 5. *And honour upholds the humble in spirit*, *Prov.* 29. 23. But Gods self-seeking, and seeking of his own glory, is his eminent excellency, it is indeed his glory, because he is and there is none else, there is nothing beside him, but that which hath issued forth from his incomprehensible fulnesse and therefore it is all the reason of the world, that as he is the *beginning*, so he should be the *end* of all things, Rom. 1. 8. And there is the more reason of it, that his Majesties seeking of his own glory, is not prejudiciall to the creatures good, but the very communication of his fulnesse goes alongs with it: So that in glorifying himself, he is most beneficiall to his own creatures. Poor creatures, indigent at home, yet are proud of nothing, and endeavours in seeking of themselves, to engrosse all perfections into their own bosomes: ambition, and vain glory, robs and spoils others excellencies to cloath it self withall, and then boasts it self in these borrowed feathers. But our blessed Lord is then doing most for our advantage, when he does all for his own glory; He needs not go abroad to seek perfection, but to manifest what he is in himself: he communicats of himself to us. O blessed self-seeking, that gave us a being, and well-being, that makes no advantage by it, but gives advantage. He hath the honour of all, but we have the profite of all.

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All things are of him, and for him; but man in a peculiar and proper way. As God in making of man, he was pleased of his goodneſſe, to ſtamp him with a character of his own Image, and in this he puts a difference between man and other creatures; that he ſhould have more plain and lively engravings of Divine Majeſty upon him, which might ſhew the glory of the Work-man: So it appears that man is in a ſingular way made for God, as his laſt end. As he is ſet nearer God, as the beginning, and cauſe, then other creatures; ſo he is placed nearer God as the end. All creatures are made *ultimò*, *laſtly* for God, yet they are all made *proximè*, *nextly* for man: Therefore *David* falls out wondring, *O Lord what is man that thou magnifieſt him, and haſt given him dominion over the works of thy hands, and put all under his feet*, Pſal. 8. 6. The creature comes out in a direct line from God, as the beams from the body of the Sun, and it is directed towards the uſe and ſervice of mankind, from whom all the excellency and perfection that is in it ſhould reflect towards God again, man is both *proximè & ultimò* for God. We are to return immediatly to the fountain of our being; and thus our happineſſe and wel-being is perpetuated. There is nothing interveening between God and us, that our uſe and ſervice and honour ſhould be directed towards: but all the ſongs and perfections of the creature, that are among the reſt of the creatures, meets all in man as their Center, for this purpoſe, that he may return with them all to the glorious Fountain from whence they iſſued: thus we ſtand next God, and in the middle between God and other creatures. This I ſay was the condition of our creation, we had our being immediatly from God as the beginning of all, and we were to have our happineſſe and wel-being by returning immediatly to God as the end of all. But ſin coming in between God and us, hath diſplaced us, ſo that we cannot now ſtand next God, without the intervention of a Mediator, and we cannot ſtand between God and creatures, to offer up their praiſes to him; but there is one Mediator between God and man,

that offers up both mans praises, and the creatures songs which meets in man.

Now seing God hath made all things for himself, and especially man for his own glory, that he may shew forth in him the glory and excellency of his power, goodnesse, holinesse, justice, and mercy: It is not only most reasonable that man should do all things that he doth to the glory of God, but it is even the beauty and perfection of a man, the greatest accession that can be to his being, to glorifie God by that being. We are not our own, therefore we ought not to live to our selves, but to God whose we are.

But you may ask what it is to glorifie God? Doth our goodnesse extend to him? Or, is it an advantage to the Almighty, that we are righteous? No indeed; and herein is the vast difference between Gods glorifying of us, and sanctifying of us, and our glorifying and sanctifying of him: *God calls things that are not, and makes them to be*; but we can do no more, but call things that are, and that far below what they are. Gods glorifying is creative, ours only declarative. He makes us such, we do no more but declare him to be such: This then is the proper work that man is created for, to be a witnesse of Gods glory, and to give testimony to the appearances, and out-breakings of it, in the wayes of power, and justice, and mercy, and truth. Other creatures are called to glorifie God, but it is rather a Proclamation to dull and senseless men, and a provocation of them to their duty. As Christ said to the Pharisees, *If these children hold their peace, the stones would cry out.* So may the Lord turn himself from stupid and senseless man, to the stones, and woods, and seas, and sun, and moon, and exhort them to mans duty, the more to provoke and stir up our dulnesse, and to make us consider, that it is a greater wonder, that man whom God hath made so glorious, can so little expresse Gods glory; then if stupid and senseless creatures should break out in singing, and praising of his Majesty. The creatures are the books wherein

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the lines of the song of Gods praises are written, and man is made a creature capable to read them, and to tune that song. They are appointed to bring in Brick to our hand, and God has fashioned us for this imployment, to make such a building of it: We are the mouth of the creation, but ere God want praises when our mouth is dumb, and our ears deaf, God will open the mouths of Asses, of Babes and Sucklings, and in them perfite praises, *Psa.* 8. 1, 2. *Epictetus* said well, *Si Luscinia essem canerem ut Luscinia; cum autem homo sim quid agam? Laudabo Deum nec finquam cessabo.* If I were a Lark, *I* would sing as a Lark, but seeing I am a man, what should I do but praise God without ceasing? It is as proper to us to praise God, as for a bird to chaunt: All beasts have their own sounds, and voices peculiar to their own nature; this is the naturall sound of a man. Now as you would think it monstrous to hear a melodious Bird croping as a Raven, so it is no lesse monstrous and degenerat, to hear the most part of the discourses of men, savouring nothing of God. If we had known that innocent estate of man, O how would we think he had fallen from heaven! We would imagine that we were thrust down from heaven, where we heard the melodious songs of Angels, into hell, to hear the howlings of damned spirits. This then is that we are bound unto, by the bond of our creation; this is our proper office and station, God once set us into, when he assigned every creature its own use and exercise: this was our portion (and O the noblest of all, because neareſt the Kings own person) to acknowledge in our hearts inwardly, and to expresse in our words and actions outwardly, what a one he is, according as he hath revealed himself in his word, and works: Its great honour to a creature to have the meanest imployment in the Court of this great King. But. O what is it to be set over all the Kings house, and over all his Kingdom? but then what is that, in respect of this, to be next to the King, to wait on his own person (so to speak) therefore the godly man is described, as a waiting maid, or servant,

ſervant, *Pſal.* 123. 2. Well then, without more diſcourſe upon it, without multiplying of it into particular branches to glorifie God, *Is in our ſouls to conceive of him, and meditate on his Name, till they receive the impreſſion and ſtamp of all the letters of his glorious Name, and then to expreſſe this in our words and actions, in commending of him, and obeying of him.* Our ſoul ſhould be as Wax to expreſſe the Seal of his glorious Attributes of juſtice, power, goodneſs, holineſs, and mercy: and as the Water that receives the beams of the Sun, reflects them back again, ſo ſhould our ſpirits receive the ſweet warming beams of his love and glorious excellency, and then reflect them towards his Majeſtie, with the deſires and affections of our ſouls. All our thoughts of him, all our affections towards him, ſhould have the ſtamp of ſingularity, ſuch as may declare there is none like him, none beſides him; our love, our mediation, our acknowledgement ſhould have this character on their front, *There is none beſides thee*, thou art, and none elſe: And then a ſoul ſhould by the cords of affection to him, and admiration of him, be bound to ſerve him. Creation puts on the obligation to glorifie him in our bodie and ſpirits, which are his; but affection only puts that to exerciſe: all other bonds leave our natures at liberty, but this conſtrains, 2 *Cor.* 5. 13. it binds on all bonds, it ties on us all divine obligations. Then a ſoul will glorifie God. when love ſo units it to God, and makes it one ſpirit with him, that his glory becomes its honour, and becomes the principle of all our inward affections, and outward actions. It is not alwayes poſſible to have an expreſs particular thought of God, and his glory, in every action, and medikation; but for the moſt part it ought to be ſo: And if ſouls were accuſtomed to medication on God, it would become their very nature, *altera natura*, pleaſant and delightſome. However, if there be not alwayes an expreſs intention of Gods glory, yet there ought to be kept alwayes ſuch a diſpoſition and temper of ſpirit, as it may be conſtrued to proceed from the intention

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of Gods Glory, and then it remains in the ſeed and fruit, if not in it ſelf.

Now when we are ſpeaking of the great end and purpoſe of our Creation, we call to minde our lamentable and tragicall fall from that bleſſed ſtation we were conſtitute into, *All men have ſinned and come ſhort of the glory of God*, Rom. 3. 23. His being in the world was for that glory, and he is come ſhort of that glory: O ſtrange ſhort coming! ſhort of all that he was ordained for, what is he now meet for? For what purpoſe is that chief of the works of God now? The ſalt if it loſe its ſaltneſſe its meet for nothing, for wherewithall ſhall it be ſeaſoned, *Mark* 9. 50. Even ſo when man is rendered unfit for his proper end, he is meet for nothing, but to be caſt out and trod upon, he is like a withered branch that muſt be caſt in the fire, *Joh.* 15. 6. Somethings if they faile in one uſe they are good for another, but the beſt things are not ſo, *Corruptio optimi peſſima*: As the Lord ſpeaks to the houſe of Iſrael, *ſhall wood be taken of the vine tree for any work, even ſo is the inhabitants of Jeruſalem*, Ezech. 15. 2, 3, 4, 5. If it yield not Wine, its good for nothing: ſo if man do not glorify God, if he fall from that, he is meet for nothing, but to be caſt into the fire of hell, and burnt for ever, he is for no uſe in the Creation but to be fuel to the fire of the Lords indignation.

But behold the goodneſs of the Lord and his kindneſs and love hath appeared toward man, *not by works of righteouſneſſe which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us through Jeſus Chriſt*, Tit. 3. 4, 5. Our Lord Jeſus by whom all things were created, and for whom, would not let this excellent workmanſhip periſh ſo, therefore he goes about the work of Redemption: a ſecond Creation more laborious and alſo more glorious then the firſt, that ſo he might glorify his Father, and our Father: Thus the breach is made up, thus the unſavoury ſalt is ſeaſoned, thus the withered branch is quickened again for that ſame fruit of praiſes and glorifying of God. This is the end of his ſecond Creation, as it was of the firſt: *we are his workman-*

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ſhip created to good works in Chriſt Jeſus, *Eph.* 2. 10. This is the work of God, to believe in him, to ſet to our ſeal, and to give our Teſtimony to all his Attributes, *Joh.* 6. 29. and 3. 33. We are bought with a price, and therefore we ought to glorify him with our ſouls and bodies, he made us with a word, and that bound us, but now he has made us again and payed a price for us, and ſo we are twice bound not to be our own but his 1. *Cor.* 6. laſt, ver. *And ſo to glorify him in our bodies and ſpirits.* I beſeech you gather your ſpirits, call them home about the buſineſſe, we once came ſhort of our end, Gods glory and our happineſſe; but know that it is attainable again, we loſt both, but both are found in Chriſt, Awake then and ſtirre up your ſpirits, elſe it ſhall be double condemnation, when we have the offer of being reſtored to our former bleſſed condition, to love our preſent miſery better. Once eſtabliſh this point within your ſouls, and therefore ask, why came I hither? to what purpoſe am I come into the world? *If* you do not ask it, what will you anſwer when he asks you at your appearance before his Tribunall? *I* beſeech you what will many of you ſay in that day, when the Maſter returns and takes an account of your diſpenſation? you are ſent in the world only for this buſineſſe, to ſerve the Lord, now what will many of you anſwer? If you ſpeak the truth (as then you muſt do it, you cannot lie then) you muſt ſay, Lord, I ſpent my time in ſerving my own luſts, I was taken up with other buſineſſes, and had no leaſure, I was occupyed in my calling. Even as if an Ambaſſadour of a King ſhould return him this account of his negotiation, I was buſie at cards and dice, I ſpent my mony and did wear my cloaths: though you think your plowing, and harrowing, and trafficking, and reaping very neceſſarie, yet certainly, theſe are but as trifles and toyes to the main buſineſs. O what a dreadfull account will ſouls make, they come here for no purpoſe but to ſerve their bodies and ſenſes, to be ſlaves to all the creatures, which were once put under mans feet: Now man is under the feet of all, and he has put him-

ſelf

ſelf ſo. If you were *of theſe* creatures, then you might be *for them*: you ſeek them as if you were created for them, and not they for you, and you ſeek your ſelves, as if you were *of your ſelves*, and had not your diſcent *of God*. Know my beloved that you were not made for that purpoſe, nor yet redeemed either to ſerve your ſelves, or other creatures, but that other creatures might ſerve you, and ye ſerve God, *Luk.* 1. 74, 75. And this is really the beſt way to ſerve our ſelves and to ſave our ſelves, to ſerve God: ſelf-ſeeking, is ſelf-deſtroying, ſelf-denying, is ſelf-ſaving, ſoul-ſaving, *He that ſeeketh to ſave his life ſhall loſe it, and he that loſeth it ſhall finde it, and he that denies himſelf and follows me, is my diſciple* Will ye once ſit down in good earneſt about this buſineſs. Its lamentable to be yet to beginne to learn to live, when ye muſt die, ye will be out of the world almoſt, ere ye bethink your ſelf, why come I into the world? *Quidam tunc vivere incipiunt, cum deſinendum eſt, immo quidam ante vivere deſierunt quam inciperent.* this is of all moſt lamentable, many ſouls end their life, before they begin to live, for what is our life, but a living death, while we do not live to God, and while we live not in relation to the great end of our life and being? the glory of God. It were better, ſayes Chriſt that ſuch had never been born, you who are created again in Jeſus Chriſt, it moſt of all concerns you to ask, why am I made? And why am I redeemed? And to what purpoſe? It is certainly that ye may glorify your heavenly Father, *Mat.* 5. 16. *Pſal.* 58. 13. And you ſhall glorify him if you bring forth much fruit and continue in his love, *Joh.* 15. 8. And this you are choſen and ordained unto, *verſ.* 16. And therefore abide in him, that you may bring forth fruit. *ver.* 4. And if you abide in him by believing, you do indeed honour him, and he that honoureth the Son honoureth the Father, *Joh.* 5. 23. Here is a compendious way to glorify God: receive ſalvation of him freely, righteouſneſſe and eternall life, and this ſets to a ſeal to Gods truth, and grace and mercy; and whoſo counts the Son worthie to be a Savjour to them, and ſets to their ſeal of approbation

probation to him whom God the Father hath ſent and ſealed, he alſo honours the Father, and then he that honoureth the Father, hath it not for nothing, *for them that honoureth me, I will honour*, 1. Sam. 2. 30. ſayes the Lord, *and he that ſerves me, him will my Father honour*, Joh. 12. 26. As the believing ſoul cares for no other, and reſpects no other but God, ſo he reſpects no other, but ſuch a ſoul, I will dwell in the humble, and look unto the contrite; there is mutuall reſpects and honours, God is the delight of ſuch a ſoul, and ſuch a ſoul is Gods delight, that ſoul ſets God in a high place, in a throne in its heart, and God ſets that ſoul in a heavenly place with Chriſt, *Eph.* 2 6. yea he comes down to ſit with us, and dwell in us, off his throne of Majeſty, *Iſai.* 66. 1, 2. and 57. 15.

PSAL. 73. 24. to the end, *Thou wilt guide me with thy counſell*, &c. *Whom have I in heaven but Thee?* &c. *It is good for me to draw neer to God.* 1 Joh. 1. 3. *Theſe things declare we to you, that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us: and truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* And Joh. 17. 21, 22, 23. *That they all may be one as we are one: I in them, and they in me, that they may be perfect in one*, &c.

IT is a matter of great conſolation, that Gods glory and our happineſſe are linked together: ſo that whoſoever ſets his glory before them ſingly to aime at, they take the moſt compendious and certain way to true bleſſedneſſe. His glory is the ultimate end of man, and ſhould be our great and laſt ſcope; But our happineſs, which conſiſts in the enjoyment of God, is ſubordinate to this, yet inſeparable from it. The end of our Creation is

communion

communion and fellowship with God, therefore man was made with an immortall soul capable of it: and this is the greatest dignity and eminency of man above the creatures, he hath not only impressed from Gods finger in his first moulding, some Characters resembling God, in righteousnesse and holinesse, but is created with a capacity of receiving more of God, by communion with him. Other creatures have already all they will have, all they can have of conformity to him, but man is made liker then all, and is fitted and fashioned to aspire to more likenesse and conformity, so that his soul may shine more and more to the perfect day.

There was an Union made already in his first moulding, and communion was to grow as a fragrant and sweet fruit out of this blessed root; Union and similitude is the ground of fellowship and communion. That union was gracious that communion would have been glorious, for grace is the seed of glory. There was a twofold Union between *Adam* and God, an *Union of state*, and an *Union of Nature*: he was like God, and he was Gods friend. All the creatures had some likenesse to God, some engravings of his power, and goodnesse, and wisedome, but man is said to be made according to Gods Image, *Let us make man like unto us.* Other creatures had *similitudinem vestigii*, but man had *similitudinem facici*. Holinesse and righteousnesse is Gods face, the very excellency and glory of all his Attributes, and the Lord stamps the image of these upon man. Other Attributes are but like his back parts, and he leaves the resemblance of his footsteps upon other creatures. What can be so beautifull as the Image of God upon the soul? Creatures, the nearer they are to God, the more pure and excellent. We see in this Fabrick of the World, bodies the higher they are, the more pure and cleanly, the more beautifull. Now then what was man that was made a little lower then the Angels? In the Hebrew, a little *lower then God, tantum non Deus.* Seeing man is set next to God, his glory and beauty certainly surpasses

paſſes the glory of the Sun and Heavens. Things contiguous and next other are like other; The water is liker air then the earth, therefore it is next the air; the Air is liker Heaven then water, therefore it is next to it. *Omne contiguum ſpirituali, eſt ſpirituale.* Angels and men next God, are ſpirits as He is a Spirit. Now ſimilitude is the ground of friendſhip. *Pares paribus congregantur, ſimilitudo neceſſitudinis vinculum.* It is that which conciliats affection among men, ſo it is here by proportion, God ſees that all is very good, and man the beſt of his works; and he loves him, and makes him his friend, for his own Image which he beholds in him.

At length from theſe two roots this pleaſant and fragrant fruit of Communion with, and enjoyment of God growes up. This is the intertainment of friends, to delight into one another, and to enjoy one another, *Amicorum omnia communia*, love makes all common, it opens the treaſure of Gods fulneſſe, and makes a vent of divine bountie towards man, and it opens the heart of man, and makes it large as the ſand of the ſea to receive of God. Our receiving of his fulneſſe, is all the intertainment we can give him. O what bleſſedneſſe is this for a ſoul to live in him, and it lives in him when it loves him, *anima eſt ubi amat, non ubi animat*, and to taſte of his ſweetneſſe and be ſatisfied with him, this makes perfect oneneſſe: and perfect oneneſſe, with God (who is the fountain of life, and in whoſe favour is life) is perfect bleſſedneſſe.

But we muſt ſtand a little here and conſider our miſerie, that have fallen from ſuch an excellencie: how are we come down from Heaven wonderfully? Sinne was interpoſed between God and man, and this diſſolves the union, and hinders the communion: An enemy is come between two friends and puts them at odds, and Oh, an eternall odds; ſin hath ſown this diſcord, and alienated our hearts from God. Mans glory conſiſted in the irradiation of the ſoul from Gods ſhining countenance, this made him light, Gods face ſhined on him. But ſin interpoſing, has eclipſed

eclipsed that light, and brought on an eternall night of darkness over the soul: And thus we are spoiled of the Image of God, as when the Earth comes betwixt the Sun and Moon. Now then, there can no beams of divine favour and love break through directly towards us, because of the cloud of our sins, that separates between God and us, and because of the partition wall of Ordinances, and the hand writing which was against us, Gods holy Law, and severe justice, *Col.* 3. 14.

Then what shall we do? How shall we see his face in joy? Certainly it had been altogether impossible, if our Lord Jesus Christ had not come, who is the light and life of men, the Father shines on him, and the beams of his love reflects upon us, from the Son: The love of God, and his favourable countenane, that cannot meet with us in a direct and immediat beam, they fall on us in this blessed compass, by the intervention of a Mediator. We are rebels, standing at distance with God, Christ comes between as Mediator, and Peace-maker, to reconcile us to God: *God is in Christ, reconciling the world.* God first makes an union of Natures with Christ, and so he comes near to us, down to us, who could not come up to him; and then he sends out the Word of Reconciliation, the Gospel, the tenor whereof is this, 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with the Father and his Son.* It is a voice of peace, and invitation to the fellowship of God: Behold then the happiness of man is the very end and purpose of the Gospel. Christ is the repairer of the breaches: the second *Adam* aspired to quicken what *Adam* killed; He has slain the enmity, and cancelled the hand-writing that was against us, and so made peace by the Bloud of his Cross: and then having removed all that out of the way, he comes and calls us unto the fellowship which we were ordained unto from our Creation. We who are rebels, are called to be friends; *I call you not servants, but friends.* It was a wonder that the creature should be

called

called a friend of God, but O greater wonder, that the rebell should be called a friend, and yet that is not all, we are called to nearer union, to be sons of God; this is our priviledge, *Joh.* 1. 12. This is a great part of our fellowship with the Father, and his Son, we are the Fathers children, and the Sons brethren, and if children then heirs, and heirs of God, and if brethren, then co-heirs with Christ, *Rom.* 8. 17.

Thus the union is begun again in Christ, but as long as sin dwells in our mortall bodies, it is not perfect, there is alwayes some separation, and some enmity in our hearts, and so there is neither full seeing of God (for we know but in part, and we see darkly) nor full enjoying of God; for we are saved by hope, and we live by faith, and not by sight. But this is begun which is the seed of eternall communion, we are here partakers of the Divine Nature. Now then it must aspire unto a more perfect union with God whose Image it is: And therefore the soul of a beleever is here still in motion towards God as his element. There is here an union in affection, but not compleated in fruition, *affectu non effectu*, the soul pants after God, *whom have I in Heaven or Earth but thee*, my flesh and my heart falleth, a beleeving soul looks upon God as its only portion, accounts nothing misery but to be separated from him, and nothing blessedness, but to be one with him, this is the load-stone of their affections, and desires, the Center which they move towards, and in which they will rest: It is true indeed that oftimes our hearts and our flesh falleth us, and we become ignorant and brutish, our affections cleavs to the earth, and tentations with their violence turn our souls towards another airth then God, as there is nothing more easily moved, and turned wrong, nor the needle that is touched with the Adamant, yet it settles not in such a posture, it recovers it self and rests never till it look towards the North, and then it is fixed: even so tentations and the corruptions and infirmities of our hearts, disturb our spirits easily, and windes them about from the Lord, towards

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any other thing, but yet we are continuing with him, and he keeps us with his right hand, and therefore we may be moved, yet we shall not be greatly commoved, we may fall but we shall rise again, he is the strength of our heart and therefore he will turn our heart about again, and fix it upon its own portion: Our union here consists more in his holding of us by his power, then our taking hold of him by faith: power and good-will encamps about both faith and the soul, we are kept by his power through faith, 1. *Pet.* 1. And thus he will *guide the soul* and still be drawing it neerer to him, from it self, and from sin, and from the world, till he *receive us into glory, and untill we be one as the Father and the Son, he in us and we in him, that we may be made perfect in one*, as it is in the words read.

This is strange, a greater unitie and fuller enjoyment, a more perfect fellowship, then ever *Adam* in his innocency would have been capable of, what soul can conceive it? What tongue expresse it? None can, for its that which *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor entred in mans heart to conceive.* We must suspend the knowledge of it till we have experience of it. Let us now believe it and then we shall finde it. There is a mutuall inhabitation which is wonderfull: Persons that *dwell* one with another have much society and fellowship, but to dwell *one in another* is a strange thing, *I in them and they in me*; and therefore God is often said to dwell in us, and we to dwell in him. But that which makes it of all most wonderfull, and incomprehensible, is, that glorious unitie and Communion between the Father and the Son, which it is made an Embleme of: *As thou Father art in me and I in thee, that that they also may be one in us.* Can you conceive that unitie of the Trinitie? Can you imagine that reciprocall inhabitation, that mutuall Communion between the Father and the Son? No, it hath not entered into the heart to conceive it: Only this much we know, that it is most perfect, is is most glorious, and so much we may apprehend of this unity of the Saints with God. O love is an uniting and transforming

forming thing, God *is love*, *and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*. He dwelleth in us by love, this makes him work in us, and ſhine upon us; love hath drawen him down from his Seat of Majeſtie, to viſit poor Cottages of ſinners, *Iſa.* 66. 1, 2. *and* 47. 15. And it is that love of God, reflecting upon our ſouls, that carries the ſoul upward to him, to live in him, and walk with him, O how doth it conſtrain a ſoul to live to him, and draw it from it ſelf, 2. *Corinth.* 5. 15. Then the more unity with God, the more ſeparation from our ſelves, and the world; the nearer God the farther from our ſelves, and the farther from our ſelves the more happy; And the more unity with God, the more unity among our ſelves, among the Brethren of our family: Becauſe here we are not fully one with our Father, therefore there are many differences between us and Brethren, becauſe we are not one perfectly in him, therefore we are not one as he and the Father is one, But when he ſhall be in us, and we in him, as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, then ſhall we be one among our ſelves, then ſhall we meet in the unity of the faith, into a perfect man, *into the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſſe of Chriſt*, *Eph.* 4. 13. Chriſt is the uniting Principle: while the Saints are not wholly one, *uni tertio*, they cannot be perfectly one *interſe* among themſelves. Conſider this, I beſeech you, Chriſts union with the Father, is the foundation of our union to God, and our union among our ſelves, this is comfortable, the ground of it is laid already. Now it is not ſimply the unity of the Father & the Son in eſſence that is here meant, for what ſhadow and reſemblace can be in the world of ſuch an incomprehenſible miſtery? But it is certainly the union and Communion of God with Chriſt Jeſus as Mediator, as the Head of the Church, which is his Body. Therefore ſeeing the Father is ſo wonderfully well pleaſed and one with Chriſt, his welbeloved Son and Meſſenger of the Covenant, and chief party contracting in our name, He is by vertue of this, one with us, who are his ſeed and members.

And

And therefore the members should grow up in the head Christ, from whom the whole body makes increase according to the effectuall working of the spirit in it, *Eph.*4.15. 16. Now if the union between the Father and Christ our Head cannot be dissolved, and cannot be barren and unfruitfull, then certainly the spirit of the Father, which is given to Christ beyond measure, must effectually work in every member, till it bring them to the unity of the faith, and to the measure of the perfect man which is the fulnesse of Christ. So then every beleeving soul is one with the Father as Christ is one, because he is the Head and they his members, and the day is comming that all the members shall be perfectly united to the Head Christ, and grow up to the perfect man which is the stature of Christs fulnesse, *and then shall we all be made perfect in one, we shall be one as he is one,* because he and we are one perfect man, Head and members.

Now to what purpose is all this spoken? I fear it doth not stir up in our souls a desire after such a blessed life: Whose heart would not be moved at the sound of such words? Our fellowship is with the Father and his Son, we are made perfect, he in us, and we in him: Certainly that soul is void of the life of God, that doth not find some sparkle of holy ambition kindled within, after such a glorious and blessed condition. But these things savour not, and taste not to the most part, the naturall man knows them not, for they are spiritually discerned: How lamentable is it, that Christ is come to restore us to our lost blessednesse, and yet no man almost considers it or layes it to heart: O how miserable, twice miserable is that soul, that doth not draw near to God in Christ, when God hath come so near to us in Christ, that goes a-whooring after the lust of the eyes, and flesh, and after the imaginations of their own heart, and will not be guided by Christ the way and life, to glory. *Thou shalt destroy them, O Lord, Psal.* 73. 27. All men are far off from God, from the womb: Behold we may have accesse to God in Christ,

wo to them that are yet far off, and will not draw nea
they shall all perish. I exhort you to consider what yo
are doing, the most part of you are going away fro
God, you were born far off, and you will yet go fu
ther; know what you will meet with in that way, de
struction.

You have never yet asked in earnest for what purpo
you came in the world? What wonder ye wander an
walk at randome, seeing ye have not proposed to your selv
any certain scope and aime? It is great folly, you wou
not be so foolish in any pettle businesse, but O how fo
lish men are in the main businesse. *The light of the body*
the eye, if that be not light, the whole body is full of dar
nesse. If your intention be once right established, a
your course will be orderly, but if you be dark and blin
in this point, and have not considered it, you cannot wal
in the light, your whole way is darknesse: The rig
consideration of this great *end*, would shine unto you, an
direct your way, but while you have not proposed this en
unto your selves, the enjoyment of God, you must spen
your time either in doing nothing to that purpose, or do
ing contrary to it. All your other lawfull businesse, you
callings, and occupations, are but in the by, they are no
the end, nor the way, but you make them only your bu
sinesse, they are altogether impertinent to this end: an
the rest of your walking in lusts and ignorance, is not on
ly impertinent, but inconsistent with it, and contrare t
it. If you think that you have this before your eyes, t
enjoy God, I pray you look upon the way you choose: I
your drunkennesse, your swearing, your uncleannesse
your contentions and railings, and such works of th
flesh, are those the way to enjoy God? Shall not th
separate between God and you? Is your eating, an
drinking, and sleeping as beasts, and labouring in you
Callings, are these all the means you use to enjoy God
Be not deceived, you who draw not neat God by Pray
often in secret, and by faith in his Son Christ, as lost m
serable

ſerable ſinners to be ſaved, and reconciled by him, you have no fellowſhip with him, and you ſhall not enjoy him hereafter. You whoſe hearts are given to your covetouſneſs, who have many lovers and Idols beſide him, you cannot ſay, Whom have I beſide thee in the earth? No, you have many other things beſide God. You can have nothing of God, except ye make him all to you, unleſſe you have him alone. *My undefiled is one, Cant.* 6. 9. he muſt be alone, for his glory he will not give to another: If you divide your affections, and pretend to give him part, and your luſts other part, you may be doing, but he will not divide his glory ſo, he will give no part of it to any other thing. But as for thoſe ſouls that come to him and ſee their miſery without him, O know how good it is! It is not only *good*, but *beſt*, yea *only good*, it is *bonum*, and it is *optimum*, yea, it is *unicum*, there is none good, ſave one, even God, and there is nothing good for us, but this one, to be near God, and ſo near, that we may be one, one ſpirit with the Lord, for he that is joyned to the Lord is one ſpirit: Rejoice in your portion, and long for the poſſeſſion of it. Let all your meditations, and affections and converſation, proclaim this, *Whom have I in heaven, but thee, and none in the earth beſide thee.* And certainly he ſhall guide you to the end, and receive you into glory, then you ſhall reſt from your labours, becauſe you ſhall dwell in him, and enjoy that which you longed and laboured for. Let the conſideration of our end unite the hearts of Chriſtians here. O what an abſurd thing is it, that theſe who ſhall lodge together at night and be made perfect in one, ſhould not only go contrarywiſe, but have contrary mindes and affections.

Of the Scriptures.

2 Tim. 3. 16. *All Scriptures is given*, &c.

WE told you that there was nothing more neceſſary to know, then what our end is, and what the way is that leads to that end: we ſee the moſt part of men walking at random, running an uncertain race, becauſe they do not propoſe unto themſelves a certain ſcope to aim at, and whether to direct their whole courſe. According to mens particular inclinations and humors, ſo do the purpoſes and deſigns of men vary, and often do the purpoſes of one man change, according to the circumſtances of time, and his condition in the world. We ſee all men almoſt running croſſe one to another; one drives at the ſatisfaction of his luſt by pleaſure, another fancies a great felicity in honour, a third in getting riches. and thus men divide themſelves, whereas, if it were true happineſſe that all were ſeeking, they would all go one way towards one end. If men be not in the right way, the faſter they ſeem to move toward their mark, the further they go from it, Wandering from the right way, (ſuppoſe men intend well) will put them further from that which they intend. *Si via in contrarium data, ipſa velocitas majoris intervalli cauſa eſt:* Therefore it concerns us all moſt deeply to be acquainted with the true path of bleſſedneſſe; For if we once miſtake, the more we do, the ſwifter we move, the more diſtant we are from it indeed. And there is the more need, becauſe there are ſo many by-paths that lead to deſtruction: what ſay *I*, by-paths? No, high wayes, beaten paths, that the multitude of men walk in, and never challenge, nor will endure

ſure to be challenged, as if they were in an error. In other journeys, men keep the high plain way, and are afraid of any ſecret by-way, leſt it lead them wrong: *At hic via quæque tritiſſima maximè decipit* Here the high pathed way leads wrong, and, O far wrong! to Hell. This is the meaning of Chriſts Sermon, *Enter in at the ſtrait gate*, but walk not in the broad way where many walk, for it leads to deſtruction; Therefore I would have this perſwaſion once begotten in your ſouls, That the courſe of the world, the way of the moſt part of men, is dangerous, is damnable. O conſider whether the way will lead you, before you go further. Do not think it a folly to ſtand ſtill now, and examine it, when ye have gone on ſo long in their company. Stand, I ſay, and conſider, be not ignorant as beaſts, that know no other thing then to follow the drove, *quæ pergunt, non qua eundum eſt, ſed qua itur*, they follow not whether they ought to go, but whether moſt go: you are men and have reaſonable ſouls within you, therefore I beſeech you be not compoſed, and faſhioned according to cuſtome, and example, that is brutiſh, but according to ſome inward knowledge and reaſon: Retire once from the multitude, and ask in earneſt at God, What is the way? Him that fears him, he will teach the way that he ſhould chooſe: the way to this bleſſed end is very ſtrait, very difficult, you muſt have a guide in it, you muſt have a lamp and a light in it, elſe you cannot but go wrong.

The principles of reaſon within us are too dark and dim, they will never lead us through the pits and ſnares in the way: Theſe indeed ſhined brightly in *Adam*, that he needed no light without him, no voice about him; But ſin hath extinguiſhed it much, and there remains nothing but ſome little ſpunk, or ſparkle under the aſhes of much corruption, that is but inſufficient in it ſelf, and is often more blinded and darkned by luſts: ſo that if it were never ſo much refined, as it was in many Heathens, yet it is but the blind leading the blind, and both muſt fall into the ditch. Our end is high and divine, *To glorifie God and*

to enjoy Him, therefore our reason *caligat ad suprema*, it ca... no more stedfastly behold that glorious end, and mov... towards it, then our weak eyes can behold the Sun: Ou... eye can look downward upon the earth, but not upward t... the Heavens. So we have some remnant of reason in u... that hath some petty and poor ability for matters of litt... moment, as the things of this life: but if once we look upward to the glory of God, or eternall happinesse, our eyes are dazled, our reason confounded, we cannot stedfastly behold that, *Eph.* 4. 18. 2 *Cor.* 3. 13, 14.

Therefore the Lord hath been pleased to give us the Scriptures, which may be a *Lamp unto our feet*, and *a guide unto our way, whereunto we shall do well to take heed, as unto a candle or a light that shines in a dark place, till the day dawn*, 2 Pet. 1. 19. These are *able to make us wise unto salvation*. Let us hear what *Paul* speaks to *Timothy*, 2 Tim. 3. 16. *All Scriptures is given*, &c. where you have two points of high concernment, The Authority of the Scriptures, and their Utility. Their Authority, for they are given by Divine Inspiration, their Utility, for they are profitable for Doctrine, *&c.* and can *make us perfect*, and well furnished to every good work.

The authority of it is in a peculiar way divine, *of him, and through him are all things*: all Writings of men according to the truth of the Scriptures, have some Divinity in them, in as much as they have of truth, which is a Divine thing: Yet the Holy Scriptures are by way of excellency attributed to God, for they are immediately inspired of God: Therefore *Peter* saith, that *the Scripture came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, 2 Pet. 1. 21. God by his Spirit as it were, acts the part of the soul, in the Prophets and Apostles; and they did no more but uttered what the Spirit conceived: The Holy Ghost inspires the matters and the words, and they were but tongues and pens to speak and write it unto the people; there needed no debate, no search in their own minds, for the truth, no inquisition for light,

but

but light shined upon their souls so brightly, so convincingly, that it put it beyond all question, that it was the mind and voice of God. You need not ask how they did know that their dreams or visions were indeed from the Lord? And that they did not frame any imagination in their own hearts, and taught it for his Word, as many did? I say, you need no more ask that, then ask how shall a man see light, or know the Sun-shine? light makes it self manifest, and all other things, its seen by its own brightnesse; even so the holy men of God, needed not any mark or sign to know the Spirits voice, his revelation needed not the light of any other thing, it was light it self, it would certainly over-power the soul and mind, and leave no place of doubting: God who cannot be deceived, and can deceive no man, hath delivered us this Doctrine. O with what reverence should we receive it, as if we heard the Lord from heaven speak. If you ask how you shall be perswaded that the Scriptures are the Word of God, his very mind opened to men and made legible? Truly there are somethings cannot be well proven, not because they are doubtfull, but because they are clear of themselves, and beyond all doubt and exception. Principles of Arts must not be proven, but supposed, till you find by triall and experience afterward that they were indeed reall true. There are, no question such characters of Divinity, and Majesty, imprinted in the very Scriptures themselves, that whosoever hath the eyes of his understanding opened, though he run he may read them, and find God in them. What Majesty is in the very simplicity and plainnesse of the Scriptures? They do not labour to please mens ears, and adorn the matter, with the curious garments of words, and phrases, but represents the very matter it self to the soul, as that which in it self is worthy of all acceptation, and needs no humane eloquence to commend it. Painting doth spoil native beauty, externall ornaments would disfigure somethings, that are of themselves proportioned and lovely, therefore the Lord chooses a plain and simple

stile,

ſtile, which is foolishneſſe to the world, but in theſe ſwadling cloaths of the Scriptures, and this poor Cottage the Child Jeſus, the Lord of Heaven and Earth is contained. There is a Jewel of the myſterious wiſdome of God, and mans eternall bleſſedneſſe in this Minerall: What glorious and aſtoniſhing humility is here? What humble and homely Glory and Majeſty alſo? He is moſt high, and yet none ſo lowly. What excellent conſent and harmony of many Writers, in ſuch diſtant times, wonder at it? All ſpeak one thing, to one purpoſe, to bring men to God, to abaſe all glory, and exalt him alone. Muſt it not be one Spirit that hath quickned all theſe, and breaths in them all this one heavenly Song, of *Glory to God on high, and good will towards men.* Other Writers will reaſon things with you, to convince you, and perſwade you, and many thinks them more profound and deep for that reaſon, and do deſpiſe the baſeneſſe of the Scriptures: But to them whoſe eyes are opened, the Majeſty and Authority of God commanding, and aſſerting, and teſtifying, to them is more convincing, from its own bare aſſertion, nor all Humane Reaſon.

Although there be much light in the Scriptures to guide mens way to Gods glory and there own happineſs, yet certainly it will all be to ſmall purpoſe if the eyes of our underſtanding be darkened and blinded. If you ſhall ſurround a man with day light, except he open his eyes he cannot ſee, the Scriptures are a clear Sun of life, and righteouſneſs; but the blind ſoul compaſſed with that light is nothing the wiſer; but thinks the lamp of the word ſhines not becauſe it ſees not, it hath its own dungeon within it, therefore the ſpirit of God muſt open the eyes of the blind, and enlighten the eyes of the underſtanding, that a ſoul may ſee wonderfull things in Gods Law, *Pſal.* 119. 5. 18. *Joh.* 1. 5. The light may ſhine in the darkneſs, but the darkneſs cannot comprehend it. I wonder not that the moſt part of men can ſee no beautie, no Majeſtie, no Excellencie, in the holy Scriptures to allure them, becauſe they are naturall and

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have not the ſpirit of God, and ſo cannot know theſe things, for they are ſpiritually diſcerned, 2. *Cor.* 2. 14. &c. Therefore as the inſpiration of God did conceive this writing at firſt, and preached this Doctrine into the world, ſo there can no ſoul underſtand it, or profite by it, but by the inſpiration of the Almighty, *verily there is a ſpirit in man, and the inſpiration of the Almighty gives him underſtanding*, ſaith *Job*. When the ſpirit comes into the Soul to engrave the Characters of that Law and truth into the heart, which were once engraven on Tables of Stone, and not written with pen and ink, then the ſpirit of Chriſt Jeſus writes over and tranſcribes the Doctrine of the Goſpel, on fleſhly Tables of the heart, drawes the lineaments of that faith, and love preached in the word upon the ſoul, then the ſoul is the Epiſtle of Chriſt, written not with inke and pen, but with the ſpirit of the living God, 2. *Cor.* 3. 3. And then the ſoul is manifeſtly declared to be ſuch, when that which is impreſſed on the heart, is expreſſed in the outward man in walking that it may be read of all men. Now the ſoul having thus received the Image of the Scriptures on it, underſtands the ſpirits voice in them, and ſees the truth and divinitie of them, the eye muſt receive ſome ſpecies and likeneſs of the object before it ſee it. it muſt be made like to the object ere it can behold it, *intelligens in actu fit ipſum intelligibile*, ſo the ſoul muſt have ſome inſpiration of the holy Ghoſt, before it can believe with the heart the inſpired Scriptures.

Now for the utilitie and profite of the Scriptures, who can ſpeak of it, according to its worth? Somethings may be over-commended, nay all things, but this one God ſpeaking in his word to mankind. Many Titles are given to humane writings, ſome are called accurate, ſome ſubtile, ſome ingenious and quick, ſome profound and deep, ſome plain, ſome learned: But call them what they pleaſe the Scriptures may vendicate to it ſelf theſe two Titles as its own prerogative. *Holy* and *profitable*; the beſt ſpeaker in the world in many words cannot want ſin, the beſt Writer hath

hath some dross and refuse: but here all is holy, all is profitable: Many Books are to no purpose but to feed and inflame mens lusts, many serve for nothing but to spend and drive over his time, without thought, most part are good for nothing, but to burden and over-wearie the world, to put them in a fancie of knowledge which they have not, many serve for this only to nourish mens curiositie, and vain imaginations and contentions about words and notions, but here is a Book *profitable*, *all profitable*, if you do not yet profite by it, you can have no pleasure in it, its only ordained for souls profiting, not for pleasing your fancy, not for matter of courious speculation, not for contention, and strife, about the interpretation of it, Many books have nothing in them, but specious Titles to commend them, they do nothing lesse then what they promise, they have a large and fair entrie which leads only into a poor Cottage, but the Scriptures hath no hyperbolick and superlative stiles to allure men, they hold out a plain and common gate, and entrie which will undoubtedly lead to a pleasant Pallace; others *& prodesse volunt et delectare*, but these certainly, *& prodesse volunt & possunt*, they both can profite you and will profite you, I wish that souls would read the Scriptures as profitable Scriptures, with intention to profite, if you do not read with such a purpose you read not the Scriptures of God, they become as another Book unto you. But what are they profitable for? *for Doctrine*, and a Divine Doctrine. A Doctrine of life and happiness, its the great promise of the new Covenant, *you shall be all taught of God*, the Scriptures can make a man learned and wise, learned to salvation. It is foolishness to the world, *but the world through wisedom know not God*. Alace what do they then know? Is there any besides God? And is there any knowledge besides the knowledge of God? You have a poor petrie wisedom among you, to gather riches and manage your business, others have a poor imaginarie wisdom that they call learning, and generally people thinks to pray to God is but a paper-skill, a little book-craft, they think

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the knowledge of God is nothing else but to learn to read the Bible. Alace mistake not, it is another thing to know God, the doctrine of Jesus Christ written on the heart, is a deep profound learning, and the poor simple and rudest people may by the spirits teaching become wiser then their Ancients, then their Ministers: O its an excellent point of learning to know how to be saved, what is it I pray you to know the course of the Heavens? To number the Orbs and the Stars in them? To measure their circumference, to reckon their motions, and yet not to know him that lives on the circle of them, and not to know how to inhabite and dwell there? If you would seek into God, and seek eyes opened to behold the mystery of the word, you would become wiser then your Pastures, you would learn from the spirit to pray better, you would find the way to Heaven better then they can teach you, or walk in it.

Then its *profitable for reproof and correction*: It contains no Doctrine very pleasant to mens naturall humours, it is indeed most pleasant, but to a right and ordered taste. You know the distemper of the eye, or the perverting of the taste, will misrepresent pleasant things, and sweet things to these senses, and make them appear ill favoured and bitter: But I say to a discerning spirit there is nothing so sweet, so comely, *I have seen an end of all perfection, but none of thy Law: thy word is sweeter to me then the honey, or the honey comb.* If a soul be prepossessed with the love of the world, and the lusts of the world, it cannot savour and taste to them, that viticus quality in the mind, will make the pleasant Gospel unpleasant: *I piped unto you, and you have not danced.* But however the Scriptures are then most profitable, when they are least pleasant to our corruptions; and therefore it is an absolute and entire Peece, *Et prodesse volunt & delectare, Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci.* There are sharp reproofs and sad corrections of his holy Law, which must make way for the pleasant and sweet Gospel: There is a reproof of life, a wounding before healing, that *whose refuseth them despiseth their own*

soul

ſoul, but the ear that heareth them abideth among the wiſe, Prov. 15. 31. Wo unto that ſoul that correction or reproof or threatning is grievous unto, *he ſhall die, ver.* 10. *he is brutiſh*, 12. 1. There is a generation of men that can endure to hear nothing but Goſpel-promiſes, that cry out againſt all reproving of ſins, and Preaching of Gods wrath againſt unbelieving ſinners, as legall, and meddling with other mens matters, eſpecially if they reprove the ſins of Rulers, their publick State-enormities, they think it grievous to them: As if the whole Word of God were not profitable, as if reproofs were not as wholſome as conſolations, as if threatnings did not contribute to make men flee from the wrath to come, into a city of refuge. Let ſuch perſons read their own characters out of wiſe *Solomon*, *Correction is grievous to them that forſake the way. Reprove a wiſe man and he will love thee, and he will be yet wiſer*, Pro. 9. 9. If we were pleaſers of men, then were we not the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, let us ſtrive to profite men, but not to pleaſe them: Peace, peace, which mens own hearts fancies, would pleaſe them, but it were better for them to be awakened out of that dream, by reproof, by correction, and he that will do ſo, ſhall *find more favour of him afterward then he that flattered him with his tongue*, Prov. 28. 23. Well then, let this be eſtabliſhed in your hearts as the foundation of all true Religion, that the Scriptures are the Word of the eternall God, and that they contain a perfect and exact rule, both of glorifying God, and of the way to enjoy him, they can make you perfect to every good work. I ſhall ſay no more on this, but beſeech you, as ye love your own ſouls, be acquainting your ſelves with them. You will hear in theſe dayes of men pretending to more divine and ſpirituall diſcoveries and revelations then the Scriptures contain: but, my Brethren, theſe can make you wiſe to ſalvation, theſe can make you perfect to every good work, then what needs more? All that is beſide ſalvation and beyond perfection account it ſuperfluous and vain, if not worſe, if not diabolicall. Let others be wiſe to their

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own deſtruction, let them eſtabliſh their own imaginations for the Word of GOD, and rule of their faith, but hold you faſt what you have received, and contend earneſtly for it, adde nothing and diminiſh nothing, let this Lamp ſhine till the day dawn, till the morning of the reſurrection, and walk ye in the light of it, and do not kindle any other ſparkles, elſe ye ſhall ly down in the graves in ſorrow, and riſe in ſorrow: Take the Word of GOD as the only rule, and the perfect rule, a rule for all your actions, civile, naturall, and Religious, for all muſt be done to his glory, and his Word teacheth how to attain that end. Let not your own imaginations, let not others example, let not the Preaching of men, let not the Concluſions, and Acts of Aſſemblies, be your rule, but in as far as you find them agreeing with this perfect rule of Gods holy Word: all other rules are *regulæ regulatæ*, they are but like publications and intimations of the rule it ſelf, Ordinances of Aſſemblies are but like the Heraulds promulgation of the Kings Statute and Law, if it varie in any thing from his intention, its not valide and binding. I beſeech you take the Scriptures for the rule of your walking, or elſe you will wander, the Scripture is *Regula regulans*, a ruling rule. If you be not acquaint with it, you muſt follow the opinions or examples of other men, and what if they lead you unto deſtruction.

JOH. 5. 39. *Search the Scriptures, for in them &c.*
Eph. 2. 20. *And are built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles.*

AS in darkneſſe there is need of a lanthorn without, and the light of the eyes within, for neither can we ſee in darkneſſe without ſome lamp, though we have never ſo good eyes, nor yet ſee without eyes, though in never ſo clear a Sun-ſhine: ſo

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there is absolute need, for the guiding of our feet in the dangerous and dark paths to eternall life (that is full of pits and snares) of the Lamp or Word written or preached without us, and the illumination of the holy Ghost within us. These are conjoined, *Isai.* 59. 21. *This is my Covenant, the Spirit that is upon thee, and the words that I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor the mouth of thy seed,* &c. There are words without, and there must needs be a Spirit within, which makes us to behold the truth and grace contained in these words. There is a Law written without, with pen and ink, and there is a Law written within upon the heart, with the Spirit of the living God: the Law without is the Pattern and exact Coppy, the Law within is the Transcript or the Image of God upon the heart, framed and fashioned according to the similitude of it, 2 *Cor.* 3. *Heb.* 8. 10. So then there needs be no more question about the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, among those who have their senses exercised to discern between good and ill, then among men who see, and taste, concerning light and darknesse, sweet, and bitter. The perswasion of a Christian is fetched deeper then the reasons of men, their faith is the evidence of things not seen, its an eye, a supernaturall eye, whereby a soul beholds that Majesty and excellency of God shining in the word which though it shine about the rest of the world, yet its not seen because they cannot know it, nor discern it. Wonder not that the multitude of men cannot beleeve the report that is made, that there are so few who finds any such excellency and sweetnesse in the Gospel as is reported, because saith *Isai.* 53. 1. The arm of the Lord is not revealed to them, the hand of God must first write on their heart, ere they understand the writings of the Scriptures, his arm must create an eye in their soules, an eternall light, before it can behold that glorious brightnesse of God shining in the word. The word is Gods testimonie of himself, of his grace, and mercy and good will to mankind: Now no man can receive this testimony, unlesse it be sealed and confirmed by the Holy Ghost into

into the heart, ſaith *Peter*, *we are his witneſſes of theſe things, and ſo alſo is the Holy Ghoſt whom God hath given to thoſe that obey him*, Acts 5. 32. The word witneſſes to the eare, and the ſpirit teſtifieth to our ſpirits the truth and worth of that, and therefore the ſpirit is a ſeal and a witneſſe. The word is the Lords voice to his own children, baſtards cannot know it, *but my ſheep hear my voice*, *Joh.* 10. 4. 16. You know no difference between the bleating of one ſheep and another, but the poor lambs know their Mothers voice, there is a ſecret inſtinct of nature, that is more powerfull then many marks, and ſignes, even ſo theſe who are begotten of God know his voice, they diſcern that in it, which all the world that hear it cannot diſcern, there is a ſympathie between their ſouls and that living Word, that word is the immortall ſeed they are begotten of, and there is a naturall inſtinct to love that, and to meditate in it, ſuch an inclination to it as in new born Babes to the breaſts, ſo the children of *God do deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby*, as they were born of it. 1. *Pet.* 2. 2. In theſe Scriptures which we read in your audience, you have ſomething of their excellency, and our duty there is a rich Jewel in them, a precious Pearl in that field, even Jeſus Chriſt, and in him eternall life, and therefore we ought to ſearch the Scriptures for this Jewell, to digge the field for this Pearl, the Doctrine of the Prophets and Apoſtles, is a ſure foundation whereupon ſouls may build their eternall felicity, and the hope of it: Jeſus Chriſt is the very chief Stone in that foundation, whereupon the weight of all the Saints and all there hopes hanges. And therefore we ought to lean the weight of our ſouls only to this truth of God, and build our faith only upon it: and ſquare our practiſe only by it.

We ſhall ſpeak ſomething of the firſt, that it may be a a ſpurre to the ſecond. The Jews had ſome reſpective opinion of the word of God, they knew that in them was eternall life, they thought it a Doctrine of life and happineſs, and ſo cried up Moſes writings, but they would

not believe Christs words, they erred not, understanding the Scriptures, and so set the writings of Moses Law at variance, with the preaching of Christs Gospel: What a pittifull mistake was this? they thought they had eternall life in the Scriptures, and yet they did not receive nor acknowledge him whom to know was eternall life, therefore our Lord Jesus sends them back again to the Scriptures, go and search them. you think, and you think well, that in them you may finde the way to eternall life, but while you seek it in them you mistake it, these Scriptures testifie of me the end of the Law, but you cannot behold the end of that Ministry, because of the blindnesse of your hearts, *Rom.* 10. 3 2 *Cor.* 3. 13, 14. Therefore search again, unfold the ceremonies, I am wrapt in them, and life eternall with me, digge up the Law till you finde the bottom of Gods purpose in it, till you find the end of the ministration and you shall finde me, the way and truth, and life, and so you shall have that eternall life which now you do but think you have, and are beguiled: While you seek it out of me, in vain you think you have it, for it is not in the Scriptures, but because they testifie of me the life and the light of men. May not this now commend the word to us, eternall life is in it. Other writings and discourses may tickle the ears, with some pleasing eloquence, but that is vanishing, its but like a Musicians voice, some may represent some petrie and momentany advantage, but how soon shall an end be put to all that? so that within a little time the advantage of all the books of the world shall be gone. The statutes and lawes of Kings and Parliaments can reach no further then some temporall reward or punishment, their highest pain is the killing of this body, their highest reward is some evanishing and fading honour or perishing riches: But he sheweth his word, and judgements to us, and hath not dealt so with every nation, *Psal.* 147. 19. 20. And no nation under the whole Heaven hath such Laws and Ordinances, eternall life and eternall death is wrapt up in them, these are rewards and punish-

punishments suteable to the Majesty and Magnificence of the eternall Law-giver. Consider I beseech you, what is folded up here, the Scriptures shews the path of life, life is of all beings most excellent, and comes neareſt the blessed being of God. When we say life, we understand a blessed life, that only deserves the name. Now this we have lost in *Adam*, death is past upon all men, but that death is not the worst, its but a consequent of a soul-death, the immortall soul whose life consisted in Communion with God, and peace with him, is separated from him by sin, and so killed, when its cut of from the fountain of life, what life can it have any more, then a Beam that is cut of by the intervention of a dark body from the Sun. Now then what a blessed Doctrine must it be that brings to light life and immortalitie especially when we have so miserably lost it, and involved our souls into an eternall death? life is precious in it self, but much more precious to one condemned to die, to be caught out of the paws of the Lion, to be brought back from the Gibbet. O how will that commend the favour of a little more time in the world. But then if we knew what an eternall misery we are involved into, and stand under a sentence binding us over to such an inconceivable and insupportable punishment as is the curse and wrath of God, O how precious an esteem would souls have of the Scriptures, how would they be sweet unto their soul, because they shew unto us a way of escaping that pit of misery, and a way of attaining eternall blessednesse, as satisfying and glorious, as the misery would have been vexing and tormenting. O that ye would once lay these in the ballance together, this present life, and eternall life. Know ye not that your souls are created for eternitie, that they will eternally survive all those present things. Now how do ye imagine they shall live after this life, your thoughts, and projects, and designes, are confined within the poor narrow bounds of your time, when you die, in that day your thoughts perish, all your imaginations and purposes, and providences have an end then, they reached no further then

that time, and if you would wooly perish too, it were not ſo much matter, but for all your purpoſes and projects to come to an end, when you are but beginning to live, and enter eternitie, that is lamentable indeed. Therefore I ſay, conſider what ye are doing, weigh theſe in a ballance, eternall life and the preſent life, if there were no more difference, but the continuance of the one, and ſhortneſſe of the other, that this worlds ſtanding is but as one day, one moment to eternitie, that ought to preponderat in your ſouls, do we not here flee away as a ſhadow upon the mountains, are we not as a vapour that aſcends and for a little time appears a ſolid body, and then preſently evaniſheth, do we not come all into the ſtage of the world, as for an hour to act our part and be gone, now then what is this to endleſs eternity? When you have continued as long as ſince the world began, you are no nearer the end of it, ought not that eſtate then to be moſt in your eyes, how to lay up a foundation for the time to come. But then compare the miſery and vexation of this life, with the glory and felicitie of this eternall life: what are our dayes but few and full of trouble? Or if you will take the moſt bleſſed eſtate you have ſeen or heard of in this world, of Kings and rich men, and help all the defects of it by your imaginations: ſuppoſe unto your ſelves the high: and pitch of Glory, and abundance, and power that is attainable on earth, and when your fancie hath busked up ſuch a felicitie, compare it with eternall life: O how will that evaniſh out of your imaginations, if ſo be you know any thing of the life to come, you will even think that an odious compariſon, you will think all that earthly felicity, but light as vanity, *every man at his beſt eſtate is altogether vanity.* Eternall life will weight down eternallie, 2. *Cor.* 4. 17, 18. O but it hath an exceeding weigh in it ſelf, one moment of it, one hours poſſeſſion and taſte of it, but then what ſhall the endleſſe endurance of it adde to its weight? Now there are many that preſume they have a right to eternall life, as the Jews did you think, ſaith he, that you have it, you think well that you think it's only to be found in the Scriptures,

ptures, but you vainly think that you have found it in them: And there is this reason of it, *because you will not come to me that you may have life*, ver. 40. If you did understand the true meaning of the Scriptures, and did not rest on the outward Letter and Ordinances, you would receive the testimony that the Scriptures give of me. But now you hear not me the Fathers substantiall Word, *therefore you have not his Word abiding in you*, ver. 38. There was nothing more generall among that people nor a vain carnall confidence and presumption of being Gods people, and having interest in the promise of life eternall, as it is this day in the Visible Church. There is a multitude that are Christians only in the Letter, and not in the Spirit, that would never admit any question concerning this great matter of having eternall life, and so by not questioning it, they come to think they have it, and by degrees their conjectures and thoughts about this ariseth to the stability of some fained and strong perswasion of it. In the Old Testament the Lord strikes at the roots of their perswasions, by discovering unto them, how vain a thing it was, and how abominable before him, to have an externall profession of being his People, and to glory in externall Ordinances and Priviledges, and yet to neglect altogether the purging of their hearts, and consciences, from lusts and idolatries, and to make no conscience of walking righteously towards men: Their profession was contradicted by their practice, *Will ye steal, murther, and commit adultery, and yet come and stand in my house*, Jer. 7. 8, 9. Doth not that say as much as if I had given you liberty to do all these abominations? Even so it is this day, the most part have no more of Christianity but a name, they have some outward priviledges of Baptism, and hearing the Word, and it may be, hath a form of knowledge, and a form of worship, but in the mean time they are not baptized in heart, they are in all their conversation even conformed to the Heathen-world, they hate personall reformation, and thinks it too precise and needlesse: Now I say, such are many of you,

and yet ye would not take it well to have it questioned whether ye shall be partakers of eternall life? You think you are wronged when that is called in question. Oh that it were beyond all question indeed. But know assuredly that you are but Christians in the Letter, in the Flesh, and not in the Spirit; many of you have not so much as a form of knowledge, have not so much as the Letter of Religion: you have heard some names in the Preaching often repeated, as *Christ*, and *God*, and *Faith*, and *Heaven*, and *Hell*, and you know no more of these but the name, you consider not and meditate not on them: And these who knows the truth of the Word, yet the Word abideth not, not dwelleth in you, you have it in your mouth, you have it in your mind or understanding, but it is not received in love, it doth not dwell in the heart, *Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly*, Col. 3. 16. you have it imprisoned in your minds, and shut up into a corner where it is useless, and can do no more but witnesse against you, and scarce that; as the Gentiles incarcerated and detained the truth of God, written by nature within them, in unrighteousnesse, *Rom.* 1. 18. so do many of you detain the knowledge of his Word in unrighteousnesse, it hath no place in the heart, gets no liberty and freedome to walk through the affections, and so to order the conversation of men: And therefore the most part of men do but fancy to themselves an interest and right to eternall life, you think it, and do but think it, it is but a strong imagination, that hath no strength from the grounds of it, no stability from any evidence or promise, but meerly from it self, or it is but a light and vain conjecture that hath no strength in it, but because there is no question or doubts admitted which may try the strength of it: But then I suppose that a man could attain some answerable walking, that he had not only a form of knowledge, but some reality of practice, some inward heat of affection and zeal for God and godlinesse, yet there is one thing that wants, and if it be wanting will spoile all: And it is this which Christ reproves in the Jews,

you will not come to me to have life, the Scriptures testifie of me, but you receive not their testimony. Suppose a man had as much equity and justice towards men, piety towards God, and sobriety towards himself, as can be found among the best of men, let him be a diligent reader of the Scriptures, let him love them, and meditate on them day and night, yet if he do not come out of himself, and leave all his own righteousnesse as dung behind him, that he may be found in Jesus Christ, he hath no life, he cannot have any right to life eternall. You may think this a strange assertion, that if a man had the righteousnes & holiness of an Angel, yet he could not be saved without denying all that, and fleeing to Christ as an ungodly man: And you may think it as strange a supposall, that any person that reads the Scriptures, and walks righteously, and hath a zeal towards God, yet are such as will not come to Christ, and will not hear him, whom the Father hath sent.

But the first is the very substance of the Gospel, *There is no other Name by which men may be saved, but by Jesus Christ*, Act. 4. 12. Life eternall is all within him, *all the treasures of grace, and wisdome and knowledge, are seated in him*, Col. 1. 19. and 2. 3. All the light of life and salvation is imbodied in this Sun of Righteousnesse since the Eclipse of mans felicity in the Garden. *Adam* was a living soul, but he lost his own life, and killed his Posterity. Christ Jesus the second common Man in the World is a quickning spirit, he hath not only life in himself, but he gives it more abundantly: And therefore you have it so often repeated in *John*, who was the Disciple most acquainted with Christ, *In him was life, and the life was the light of men*, 1. 4. *And he is the bread of life, that gives life to the world*, Joh. 6. 33. and 35. *He is the resurrection and the life*, 11. 25. and *the way, the truth and life*, 14. 6. The Scriptures do not contain eternall life, but in as far as they lead to him who is life, and whom to know and imbrace is eternall life: And therefore (saith he) *these are they which testifie of me*. Man lived immediatly in God when he was

in

In innocency, he had life in himself from God, but then he began to live in himself, without dependence on God the Fountain of Life, and this himself being interposed between God and his life, it evanished, even as a Beam by the interveening of any grosse body between it and the Sun. Now mans light and life being thus Eclipsed and cut off, the Lord is pleased to let all fulnesse dwell in his Son Jesus Christ, and *the fulnesse of the God-head dwell in him bodily*, Col. 2. 9. that since there was no accesse immediatly to God for life (a flaming fire, and sword of Divine Justice compassing and guarding the Tree of Life, lest man should touch it) there might be accesse to God in a Mediator like unto us, that we might come to him, and might have life from God by the intervention of Jesus Christ.

Look then what is in the Holy Scriptures, and you shall find it but a letter of death and ministration of condemnation while it is separated from him, Christ is the very life and spirit of the Scriptures, by whose vertue they quicken our souls, if you consider the perfect rule of righteousnesse in the Law, you cannot find life there, because you cannot be conformed unto it, the holiest man offends in every thing, and that holy Law being violated in any thing, will send thee to hell with a curse, (*Cursed is he that abides not in every thing.* If you look upon the promise of life, *Do this and live*; what comfort can you find in it, except you could find *doing* in your selves? And can any man living find such exact obedience as the Law requires? There is a mistake among many, they conceive that the Lord cannot but be well pleased with them, if they do what they can, but be not deceived, the Law of God requires perfect doing, it will not compound with thee, and come down in its terms, not one jot of the rigour of it will be remitted: If you can not do all that is commanded, all you do will not satisfie that promise, therefore thou must be turned over from the promise of life to the curse, and there thou shalt finde thy name written; Therefore it is absolutely necessary that

Jesus

Jesus Christ be made under the Law, and give obedience in all things even to the death of the crosse, and so be made a curse for us, and sin for us, even he who knew no sin, and thus in him you find the Law fulfilled, Justice satisfyed, and God pleased, in him you find the promise of life indeed established, in a better and surer way then was first propounded, you finde life by his death, you finde life in his doing for you: And again consider the Cerimoniall Law, what were all these Sacrifices and Ceremonies? did God delight in them? could he savour their Incense, and sweet smels, and eat the fat of Lambs and be pacified? No he detests and abhors such imaginations, because that people did stay in the letter, and went no further then the Ceremonie, he declares that it was as great abomination to him, as the offering up of a Dog, while they were separated from Jesus Christ in whom his soul rested, and was pacified, they were not expiations, but provocations, they were not propitiations for sins, but abominations in themselves. But take these as the shaddows of such a living substance, take them as remembrances of him who was to come, & behold Jesus Christ lying in these Swadling-cloaths of Ceremonies, untill the fulnesse of time should come that he might be manifested in the flesh, and so you shall finde eternall life in those dead beasts, in these dumb Ceremonies, if you consider this Lamb of God slain in all these sacrifices, from the beginning of the world, then you present a sweet smelling savour to God, then you offer the true propitiation for the sins of the world, then he will delight more in that Sacrifice then all other personall obedience.

But what if I should say that the Gospel it self is a killing letter, and ministration of death, being severed from Christ, I should say nothing amisse, but what *Paul* speaketh, that his Gospel was a savour of death to many, take the most powerfull Preaching, the most sweet discourse, the most plain writings of the free grace and salvation in the Gospel, take all the Preachings of Jesus Christ himself and his

his Apostles, and you shall not find life in them unlesse ye be led by that spirit of Christ unto himself, who is the resurrection and the life: It will no more save you then the Covenant of works, unlesse that word abide and dwell in your hearts, to make you beleeve in him and imbrace him with your souls, whom God hath sent; suppose you heard all, and heard it gladly and learned it, and could discourse well upon it, and teach others, yet if you be not driven out of your selves, out of your own righteousnesse as well as sins, and pursued to this Citie of refuge Jesus Christ, you have not eternall life. Your knowledge of the truth of the Gospel, and your obedience to Gods Law will certainly kill you, and as certainly, as your ignorance and disobedience, unlesse you have imbraced in your soul, that good thing Jesus Christ contained in these truths, who is the Diamond of that Golden Ring of the Scriptures, and unlesse your soul imbrace these promises as soul-saving, as containing the chief good, and worthy of all acceptation, as well as your minde receive these as true and faithfull sayings, 1. *Tim.* 1. 15.

Thus ye see Christ Jesus is either the subject of all in the Scriptures. or the end of it all. He is the very proper subject of the Gospel: *Paul* knew nothing but Christ crucified in his Preaching, and he is the very proper *end* and scope *of the Law for righteousnesse*, Rom. 10. 3. All the Preaching of a Covenant of Works, all the curses and threatnings of the Bible, all the rigid exactions of obedience, all come to this one great design, not that we may set about such a walking to please God, or do something to pacifie him, but that we being concluded under sin and wrath on the one hand, and an impossibility to save our selves on the other hand, *Gal.* 3. 22. *Rom.* 5. 20, 21. may be pursued in to Jesus Christ for righteousnesse and life, who is both able to save us, and ready to welcome us. Therefore the Gospel opens the door of salvation in Christ, the Law is behind us with fire and sword, and destruction pursuing us, and all for this end, that sinners may come

to

to him and have life. Thus the Law is made the Pedagogue of the soul to lead it to Christ, Christ is behind us, cursing, condemning, threatning us, and he is before with stretched out arms ready to receive us, blesse us, and save us, inviting, promising, exhorting to come and have life, Christ is on Mount *Sinai*, delivering the Law with Thunders, *Acts* 7. 38. and he is on Mount *Sion*, in the calm voice, he is both upon the Mountain of Cursings and Blessings, and on both doing the part of a Mediator, *Gal.* 3. 19, 20. It is love that is in his heart which made him first cover his countenance with frowns and threats, and its love that again displays it self in his smiling countenance. Thus souls are incloſed with love pursuing, and love receiving: And thus the Law which seems most contrary to the Gospel, testifies of Christ, it gives him this testimony, that except salvation be in him, it is no where else, the Law sayes, It is not in me, seek it not in obedience, I can do nothing but destroy you, if you abide under my jurisdiction. The Ceremonies and Sacrifices say, if you can behold the end of this Ministry (if a Vail be not on your hearts, as it was on *Moses* face, 2 *Cor.* 3. 13, 14.) you may see where it is, its not in your obedience, but in the death and sufferings of the Son of God, whom we represent. Then the Gospel takes all these Coverings and Vail away, and gives a plain and open testimony of him, *There is no Name under heaven to be saved by but Christs.* The Old Testament spake by figures and signs, as dumb men do, but the New speaks in plain words, and with open face. Now I say for all this that there is no salvation but in him, yet many souls, not only these who live in their grosse sins, and have no form of godlinesse, but even the better sort of people, that have some knowledge and civility, and a kind of zeal for God, yet *they do not come to him that they may have life*, Rom. 10. 1, 2, 3. *they do not submit to the righteousnesse of God.* Here is the March that divides the wayes of Heaven, and Hell, coming to Jesus Christ, and forsaking our selves: the confidence of these

souls

ſouls is chiefly or only in that little knowledge, or zeal, o
profeſſion they have, they do not as really abhor them-
ſelves for their own righteouſneſſe, as for their unright-
ouſneſſe, they make that the covering of their nakedneſſe
and filthineſſe, which is in it ſelf as menſtrous and unclean
as any thing. It is now the very propenſion and natural
inclination of our hearts, to ſtand upright in our ſelves
Faith bowes a ſoul back to take on Chriſts righteouſneſſe,
but preſumption lifts up a ſoul upon its own bottome,
How can ye believe that ſeeks honour one of another. The
engagement of the ſoul to its own credite or eſtimation,
the engagements of ſelf-love, and ſelf-honour, do lift up
a ſoul, that it cannot ſubmit to Gods righteouſneſſe, to
righteouſneſſe in another. And therefore many do
dream and think that they have eternall life, who ſhall
awake in the end, and find that it was but a dream, a
night fancy.

Now from all this I would enforce this duty upon your
Conſciences, to ſearch the Scriptures, if you think to have
eternall life, ſearch them, if you would know Chriſt,
whom to know is eternall life, then again ſearch them,
for theſe are they that teſtifie of him. Searching imports
diligence, much diligence, its a ſerious work, its not a
common ſeeking of an eaſie and common thing, but its a
ſearch and ſcrutiny for ſome hidden thing, for ſome ſpe-
ciall thing. Its not bare reading of the Scriptures that
will anſwer this duty, except it be diligent and daily read-
ing, and its not that alone, except the Spirit within medi-
tate on them, and by meditation accompliſh a diligent
ſearch. There is ſome hidden ſecret that you muſt ſearch for
that is incloſed within the covering of words, and ſenten-
ces, there is a myſtery of wiſdome that you muſt apply your
hearts to ſearch out, *Eccl.* 7. 5. Jeſus Chriſt is the Treaſure
that is hid in this field, O a precious treaſure of eternall
life: now then ſouls ſearch into the fields of the Scriptures,
Prov. 2. 4. for him as for hid treaſure. It is not only
truth you muſt ſeek and buy, and not ſell it, but its life

you

you would ſearch, here an object that may not only take up your underſtandings, but ſatisfie your hearts. Think not you have found all when you have found the truth here, and learned it, no, except you have found life here, you have found nothing, you have miſſed the Treaſure. If you would profite by the Scriptures, you muſt bring both your underſtandings and your affections to them, and depart not till they both return full: If you bring your underſtanding to ſeek the truth, you may find truth, but not *truly*, you may find it, but you are not found of it: you may lead truth captive, and incloſe it in a priſon of your mind, and encompaſſe it about with a guard of corrupt affections, that it ſhall have no iſſue, no out-going to the reſt of your ſoul and wayes, and no influence on them; you may know the truth, but you are not known of it, and brought in captive to the obedience of it. The Treaſure that is hid in the Scriptures is Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe intire and perfect Name is, *Way*, *Truth*, and *Life*, He is a living Truth, and true Life: Therefore Chriſt is the adæquat object of the ſoul, commenſurable to all its faculties, he has Truth in him to ſatisfie the mind, and he has Life and Goodneſſe in him to ſatiate the heart: therefore if thou would find Jeſus Chriſt, bring thy whole ſoul to ſeek him, as *Paul* expreſſeth it, He is true and faithfull, and worthy of all acceptation, then bring thy judgement to find the light of truth, and thy affections to imbrace the life of goodneſſe that is in him. Now as much as ye find of him, ſo much have ye profited in the Scriptures: If you find commands there which you cannot obey, ſearch again and you may find ſtrength under that command, digge a little deeper, and you ſhall find Jeſus the end of an impoſſible command, and when you have found him, you have found life and ſtrength to obey, and you have found a propitiation and ſacrifice for tranſgreſſing and not obeying. If you find curſes in it, ſearch again and you ſhall find Jeſus Chriſt under that made a curſe for us, you ſhall find him the end of the curſe

for

for righteouſneſſe to every one that beleeves. When y
know all the Letter of the Scripture, yet you muſt ſea
into the Spirit of it, that it may be imprinted into yo
ſpirits: all you know does you no good but as its r
ceived in love, unleſſe your ſouls become a living Epiſt
and the Word without be written on the heart, you ha
found nothing. As for you that cannot read the Scr
ptures, if it be poſſible, take that pains to learn to re
them. O if you knew what they contain, and wha
they bear witneſſe of, you would have little quietneſs
you could read, at leaſt his love-epiſtles to ſinners: An
if you cannot learn, be not diſcouraged, but if your de
ſires within be fervent, your endeavours to hear it read b
others will be more earneſt. But it is not ſo much th
reading of much of it that profiteth, as the pondering o
theſe things in our hearts, and digeſting them by frequen
Meditation, till they become the food of the ſoul: This wa
Davids way, and by this he grew to the ſtature of a tall an
well-bodied Chriſtian.

EPH. 2. 20. *And builded upon the foundation o
the Apoſtles*, &c.

BElevers are the Temple of the living God, in
which he dwells and walks, 2. *Cor.* 6. 16, Every
one of them is a little Sanctuary and Temple to
his Majeſty, *ſanctifie the Lord of Hoſts in your hearts*,
though he be the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity,
yet he is pleaſed to come down to this poor Cottage of a
creatures heart, and dwell in it: Is not this as great a hum-
bling and condeſcending, for the Father to come down of
his Throne of Glory, to the poor baſe footſtool of the
creatures ſoul, as for the Son to come down in the ſhape
of a ſervant, and become in the form of ſinfull fleſh. But
then he is a Temple and Sanctuary to them, *and he ſhall*

to you a Sanctuary, Iſai. 8. *A place of refuge, a ſa-fe hiding place*, now as every one is a little ſeparated retired Temple, ſo they all conjoyned make up one Temple, one viſible body in which he dwells; therefore *Peter* calls them living Stones, built up in a ſpirituall houſe to God, 1. *Pet.* 2. 5. All theſe little Temples make up one Houſe and Temple, fitly joyned together, in which God ſhewes manifeſt ſignes of his preſence and working: unto this the Apoſtle in this place alluds. The Communion, and Union of Chriſtians with God, is of ſuch a nature, that all the relations and points of conjunction in the creatures are taken to reſemble it, and hold it out to us. We are *Citizens*, ſaith he, and *Domeſticks, houſhold-men*, and ſo dwells in his houſe, and then *we are his Houſe* beſides: now ye know there are two principall things in a Houſe, the foundation and the Corner Stone, the one ſupports the building, the other unites it, and holds it together: Theſe two parts of this ſpirituall building are here pointed at, the foundation of every particular ſtone, and of the whole building is the Doctrine of the Prophets and Apoſtles, as holding out Jeſus Chriſt to ſouls, the rock on which our houſe ſhould be builded. Not the Apoſtles or Prophets, far leſſe Paſtures and Teachers ſince; for they are but at beſt workers together with God and imployed in the building of the houſe, nor yet their Doctrine, but as it holds out that true foundation that God hath laid in Sion, *Iſai.* 28. Which is Jeſus Chriſt, for other foundations can no man lay. And then the Corner ſtone is that ſame Ieſus Chriſt, who reaches from the bottom even to the top of the building, and immediatly touches every ſtone, and both quickens it in it ſelf, and unites them together.

Well then, here is a ſure foundation to build upon our eternall happineſſe, the word of God that indures for ever holds it out to us: all men are building upon ſomething, every man is about ſome eſtabliſhment of his hopes, layes ſome foundation of his confidence, which he may ſtand upon.

upon. They are one of the two that Chriſt ſpeaks of *Luk.* 6. 46. One builds on the *Rock*, another on the *Sand*, now as the foundation is, ſo is the houſe, a changeable foundation makes a falling houſe, a ſure foundation makes a unchangeable houſe, a houſe without a foundation will prove quickly no houſe, now whatſoever men build there hope and confidence upon, beſide the word of God, his ſure Promiſe and ſure Covenant, and Jeſus Chriſt in them, they build upon no foundation, or upon a ſandy foundation. *All fleſh is graſſe, and the flower and perfection of it as the flower of the field*, here is the name and character of all created perfections, of the moſt excellent endowments of minde, of all the ſpecious actions of men, its all but vaniſhing, and vanity, every man at his beſt eſtate is ſuch, yea altogether ſuch: you who have no more to build upon but your proſperitie and wealth, O that is but ſand and dung, would any man build a houſe upon a dung-hill. You who have no other hope, but in your own good prayers, and meanings, your own reformations, and repentances, your profeſſions, and practiſes, know this that your hope is like a ſpiders houſe, like the web that ſhee hath laborioufly exerciſed her ſelf about all the weekover, and then when you lean upon that houſe it ſhall fall through, and not ſuſtain your weight: whatſoever it be beſide this Living Stone Ieſus Chriſt, who is the very ſubſtance of the word, and Promiſes, it ſhall undoubtedly prove thy ſhame, and confuſion: But behold the oppoſition the Prophet makes between the word and theſe other things, *the word of our God ſhall ſtand for ever*, *Iſai.* 40. 6, 7, 8. And therefore *Peter* makes it an *incorruptible ſeed* of which beleevers are begotten, 1 *Peter.* 1, 23. It is the unchangeable truth and immutable faithfulneſſe of God that makes his word ſo ſure, *its builded up to the Heavens.* Therefore the Pſalmiſt often Commends the word of the Lord as a *tried word*, *as purified* ſeven times, it hath endured the triall and proof of all men, of all tentations, of all generations, it hath often been put in the furnace

furnace of Queſtions and doubtings, it hath often been tried in the fire of afflictions, but it came forth like pure Gold, without droſſe. This is Faiths foundation, *God hath ſpoken in his holineſſe*, and therefore, though all men be liars, yet God will be found true, deceives none, and is deceived of none. The Lord hath taken a latitude to himſelf in his working, he loves to ſhew his Soveraignty in much of that; and therefore he changes it in men, and upon men as he pleaſeth, yet he hath condeſcended to limite and bound himſelf by his Word, and in this to ſhew his faithfulneſſe. And therefore, though heaven and earth ſhould paſſe away, though he ſhould annihilat this world, and creat new ones, yet *not one jot of his Word ſhall fail.* The earth is eſtabliſhed ſure, though it hath no foundation, for the Word of his Command ſupports it: And yet a believers confidence is upon a ſurer ground, *Though the earth ſhould be removed, yet it cannot paſſe or fail*, ſaith our Lord: And therefore the Pſalmiſt uſeth to boaſt in God, *That though the earth were removed, and the flouds liſted up their voice, yet he would not fear*, becauſe his foundation was unſhaken for all that, the word is not moved, when the world is moved, and therefore he was not moved. The worlds ſtability depends upon a word of command, but our Salvation depends on a word of Promiſe. Now you know promiſes puts an obligation upon the perſon, which commands do not, a man may change his commands as he pleaſes to his children, or ſervants, but he may not change his Promiſes, therefore the promiſes of God puts an obligation upon him, who is Truth it ſelf, not to fail in performance, or rather he is to himſelf by his unchangeable will and good pleaſure, by his faithfulneſſe and truth, an obliging and binding Law: when no creature could ſet bounds to him, he incloſes himſelf within the bounds of promiſes to us, and gives all fleſh libertie to challenge him if he be not faithfull.

Now *all the Promiſes of God are yea, and amen, in Jeſus Chriſt*, that is, eſtabliſhed, and confirmed in him; Chriſt

 in

is the surety of them, and so the certainty and stability of them depends upon him, at least to our sense, for God in all his dealing condescends to our weakness, that we may have strong consolation; a promise might suffice to ground our Faith, but he addeth an oath to his Promise and he taks Christ surety for the performance, and therefore Christ may be called the truth indeed, the substantial word of God, for he is the substance of the written and preached word, and then he is the very certainty and assurance of it, the Scriptures testifie of him, and leads us to this rock higher then we, to build upon, and against this the gates of hell cannot prevail: *If* the word lead not a soul into Christ himself, that soul hath no foundation, though thou hear the word, though thou know the word, yea, suppose thou could teach others, and instruct the ignorant, yet all that will be no foundation, as good as none except thou do it, and what is it to do the word? But to beleeve in him whom the word testifies of, this is the work of God to resigne thy soul to his mercies, and merits and have no confidence in the flesh: to scrape out all the rubbish of works, and performances, and parts out of the foundation, and singly to roll thy souls weight upon Gods promises, and Christs purchase, to look with *Paul* on all things, beside in thee, and about thee, as dung and drosse, that thou can lean no weight upon, and to remove that dunghill from the foundation of thy hope, that Jesus Christ may be the only foundation of thy soul, as God hath only laid him in the Church for a sure foundation, *that whoso believeth in him may not be ashamed:* what ever beside, a soul be established on, though it appear very solid and the soul be setled and fixed upon it, yet a day will come that will unsettle that soul, and raz that foundation, either it shall be now done in thy conscience, or it must be done at length, when that great tempest of Gods indignation shall blow from Heaven, against all unrighteousnesse of men, in the day of accounts, then shall thy house fall, and the fall of it shall be great. But a soul established upon

upon the sure promises, and upon Christ in whom they are *Yea*, and *Amen*, shall abide that storm and in that day have confidence before God, have wherewith to answer in Jesus Christ all the challenges of divine Justice, and the accusations of conscience, *he that trusts in him shall be as Mount Sion, which cannot be moved*, you see all things else change, and therefore mens hopes and joyes perish, even here, the tentations and revolutions of the times, undermines their confidence, and joy, and the blasts of the Northern wind of affliction blows away their hopes.

Now as Christ is the Foundation, so he is the Corner-stone of the building: it is Christ who hath removed that Partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles, even the Ceremonies of the one, and the Atheism of the other, *He is our peace*, who hath made of two one. The two sides of the house of God, are united by this Corner stone Jesus Christ. Thus we who were the Temples of Satan, are made the Temples of God, thus poor stranger-Gentiles who had no interest in the Covenant of Promises, come to share with *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and to be founded upon the Doctrine of the Prophets, who taught the Jewish Church: Christ is the bond of Christians, this is the Head, into which all the Members should grow up into a Body. Distance of Place, difference of Nations, distinction of Languages, all these cannot separate the Members of Jesus Christ, they are more one, though consisting of diverse Nations, Tongues, and Customes, and dispositions, then the people of one Nation, or Children of one Family; for one Lord, one Spirit, units all: Alace that all are not united in affection, and judgement. Why doth the sides of this House contend, and wrestle one against another? When there is such a Corner-stone joyning them together. Are not there many Christians who cannot endure to look upon one another, who are yet both placed in one building of the Temple of God? Alace, this is sad and shamefull. But that which I would especially have observed to this, is, that Jesus Christ is

such a Foundation that reacheth throughout the whole Building, and immediatly toucheth every stone of the Building, its such a Foundation as riseth from the bottom to the top, and therefore Jesus Christ is both the Author and Finisher of our Faith, the beginning and the end, the first stone, and the last stone of our Building must rise upon him, and by him; the least degree of grace, and the greatest perfection of it, both are in him, and therefore Christians should be most dependent creatures, dependent in their first being, and in after well-being, in their being, and growing, wholly dependent upon Christ, that *out of his fulneße, they may receive grace, and then more grace for grace*, that all may appear to be grace indeed. Now I beseech you, my beloved in the Lord, to know whereupon ye are builded, or ought to be builded. There are two great errors in the time, take heed of them, one is the doctrine of some, and another is the practice of the most part: Some do prefer their own fancies, and night-dreams, and the imaginations of their own heart to the Word of God, and upon pretence of revelation, of new light, do cast a mist upon that Word of God which is a light that hath shined from the beginning. Be not deceived, but try the spirits whether they be of God or not. There are many pretend to much of the Spirit, and therefore cry out against the Word, as *Letter*, as *Fleshe*: But my Brethren, believe not every doctrine, that calls it self a spirit, *that spirit is not of God that hears not Gods voice*, as Christ reasons against the Jews, seek ye more of the Spirit of Christ which he promiseth, who is a Spirit, that teacheth all things, and bringeth to remembrance these blessed sayings, and leads us in all truth: It shall be both safest and sweetest to you to meditate on that word of the Prophets and Apostles, and the entrance into it shall give you light, an old light which was from the beginning, and therefore a true light (for all truth is eternall) and yet a new light to your sense and feeling: Its both an old command, and a new command, an old word, and a new word;

word; if thou search it by the Spirits inspiration, that old word shall be made new, that letter made spirit and life: Such are the words that Christ speaks. But yet there are many who do not reject the Scriptures in judgement, who notwithstanding do not build on them in practice: Aals it may be said of the most part of professed Christians among us, that they are not builded upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, but upon the sayings of fallible and weak men. What ground have many of you for your faith, but because the Minister saith so? You believe so: the most part live in an implicite Faith, and practice that in themselves, which they condemn in the Papists. You do not labour to search the Scriptures, that upon that foundation you may build your Faith in the questioned truths of this age, that so you may be able to answer to these that asketh a reason of the Faith that is in you. Alace, simple souls, you believe every thing, and yet really believe nothing, because you believe not the Word, as the Word of the living God, but takes it from men upon their authority: Therefore when an temptation cometh, when any gainsayings of the truth, you cannot stand against it, because your Faith hath no foundation, but the sayings of men, or Acts of Assemblies. And therefore as men whom you trust with holding out light unto you, holds out darkness in stead of light, you imbrace that darkness also: But I beseech you, be builded upon the foundation of the Prophets, and Apostles, not upon them, but upon that whereon they were builded, the infallible truths of God. You have the Scriptures, search them, since you have reasonable souls, search them; other mens faith will not save you, you cannot see to walk to heaven by other mens light, more then you can see by their eyes: You have eyes of your own, souls of your own, subordinat to none but to the God of spirits, and Lord of consciences, Jesus Christ: and therefore examine all that is spoken to you from the word, according to the word, and receive no more upon trust from men, but as you find it upon triall to be the truths of God.

2 TIM. 1. 13. *Hold fast that form of ſound Words which thou haſt heard of me, in Faith and Love, &c.*

HEre is the ſumme of Religion, here you have a compend of the Doctrine of the Scriptures. All divine Truth may be reduced to theſe two Heads, Faith and Love, what we ought to believe, and what we ought to do? This is all the Scriptures teach, and this is all we have to learn. What have we to know but what God hath revealed of Himſelf to us? and what have we to do but what he commands us? In a word, what have we to learn in this world, but to believe in Chriſt, and love him, and ſo live to him? This is the duty of man, and this is the dignity of man, and the way to eternall life: Therefore the Scriptures, that are given to be a *lamp to our feet*, and a *guide to our paths*, contains a perfect and exact rule *credendorum, & faciendorum*, of faith and manners, of doctrine, and practice; we have in the Scriptures many truths revealed to us of God, and of the works of his hands, many precious truths, but that which moſt of all concerns us, is to know God and our ſelves, this is the ſpeciall excellency of the reaſonable creature, that it is made capable to know its Creator, and to reflect upon its own being. Now we have to know of our ſelves what we are now, and what man once was, and accordingly to know of God, what he once revealed of himſelf, and what he doth now reveal: I ſay, the Scriptures holds out to our conſideration a twofold eſtate of mankinde, and according to theſe, a twofold revelation of the Myſtery of God: We look on man now, and we find him another thing then he was once, but we do not find God one thing at one time, and another thing at another time, for there is *no ſhadow of change in him*, and, *he is the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever*: Therefore we ask not what he

he was, and what he is now, but how he manifests himself differently, according to the different estates of man, as we find in the Scriptures, man once righteous and blessed, *Eccles.* 7. 29. and God making him such, according to his own image. *Col.* 3. 10. *Eph.* 4. 24. *in righteousnesse, and true holinesse*, we find him in communion and friendship with God, set next to the divine Majesty, and above the works of his hand, and all things under his feet: How holy was he? and how happy? And happy he could not choose but be, since he was holy, being conformed and like unto God in his will, and affection, choosing that same delight, that same pleasure with God, in his understanding, knowing God and his will, and likewise his own happinesse in such a conformity, he could not but have much communion with him, that had such conformity to him, union being the foundation of communion, and great peace and solid tranquility in him.

Now in this state of mankind God expresses his goodnesse, and wisdom, and power, his holinesse, and righteousnesse. These are the Attributes that shine most brightly, in the very morning of the Creation: God revealed himself to man as a holy and just God, whose eyes could behold no iniquity, and therefore he made him upright and made a Covenant of life and peace with him, to give him immortall and eternall life, to continue him in his happy estate, if so be he continued in well-doing, *Rom.* 10. 5. *Do this and live.* In which Covenant indeed their were some outbreakings of the glorious grace, and free condescendence of God, for it was no lesse free grace and undeserved favour to promise life to his obedience, then now to promise life to our Faith, so that if the Lord had continued that Covenant with us, we ought to have called it grace, and would have been saved by grace as well as now, though it be true that there is some more occasion given to mans nature to boast and glory in that way, yet not at all before God, *Rom.* 4. 2.

But we have ſcarcely found man in ſuch an eſtate, till we have found him ſinfull and miſerable, and fallen from his excellency. That ſun ſhined in the dawning of the Creation, but before ye can well know what it is, it's ecclipſed and darkened with ſin and miſerie, as if the Lord had only ſet up ſuch a creature in the firmament of Glory, to let him know how bleſſed he could make him, and wherein his bleſſedneſſe conſiſts, and then preſently to throw him down from his excellency, when you find him mounting up to the Heavens. and ſpreading himſelf thus in holineſſe, and happineſſe like a Bay tree, behold again, and you find him not, though you ſeek him, you ſhall not find him, his place doth not know him: he is like one that comes out with a great Majeſtie upon a ſtage, and perſonats ſome Monarch, or Emperour, in the world, and then ere you can well gather your thoughts, to know what he is, he is turned off the ſtage and appears in ſome baſe and deſpicable appearance, ſo quickly is man ſtript of all theſe glorious ornaments of holineſſe, and puts on the vile rags of ſin, and wretchedneſſe, and is caſt down from the Throne of eminency above the creatures, and from fellowſhip with God, to be a ſlave and ſervant to the duſt of his feet, and to have Communion with the devil and and his angels. And now ye have man holden out in Scripture as the only wretched peece of the Creation, as the very plague of the world, *The whole Creation groaning under him*, Rom. 8. *and in pain to be delivered of ſuch a burthen*, of ſuch an execration and curſe and aſtoniſhment you find the teſtimony of the word condemnes him altogether, concludes him under ſin, and then under a curſe, and makes all fleſh guiltie in Gods ſight, the word ſpeaks otherwiſe of us then we think of our ſelves. *Their imagination is only evill continnually*, *Gen.* 6. 5. O then what muſt our affections be, that are certainly more corrupt? What then muſt our way be? *All fleſh hath corrupted their way, and done abominable works, and none doth good*, *Pſal.* 14. 1, 2, 3. But many flee in, unto their good hearts as

their

their laſt refuge, when they are beaten from theſe out-works, of their actions and ways, but the Scriptures ſhall ſtorm that alſo, *The heart is deceitfull above all things, who can know it*, Jer. 17. 9. *it is deſperatly wicked*: in a word, man is become the moſt lamentable ſpectacle in the world, a compend of all wickedneſſe and miſery, incloſed within the walls of inability, and impoſſibility to help himſelf, ſhut up within the priſon of deſpair, a ſtinking loathſome and irkſome dungeon: Its like the myrie pit that *Jeremiah* was caſt into, that there was no out-coming, and no pleaſant abode in it.

Now mans eſtate being thus, nay, having made himſelf thus, *and ſought out to himſelf ſuch ſad inventions*, Eccleſ. 7. 29. *And having deſtroyed himſelf*, Hoſ. 13. 9. What think ye? ſhould any pitty him? If he had fallen in ſuch a pit of miſery ignorantly, and unwillingly, he had been an object of compaſſion, but having caſt himſelf headlong into it, who ſhould have pitty on him? Or who ſhould go aſide to ask how he doth, and bemoan him? *Jer.* 15. 5. *But behold the Lord pitties man as a father doth his children*, *Pſal.* 103. His compaſſions fail not, he comes by ſuch an loathſome and contemptible object, *and caſts his skirts over it, and ſaith, live*, Ezek. 16. *And maketh it a time of love.* I ſay, no fleſh could have expected any more of God, then to make man happy, and holy, and to promiſe him life in well doing, but to repair that happineſſe after its wilfully loſt, and to give life to evil doers and ſinners, O how far was it from *Adams* expectation when he fled from God? Here then is the wonder, that when men and Angels were in expectation of the revelation of his wrath from Heaven againſt their wickedneſſe, and the execution of the curſe, man was concluded under, that even then God is perſuing man, and perſues him with love, and opens up to him his very heart and bowels of love in Jeſus Chriſt? Behold then the ſecond revelation and manifeſtation of God, in a way of grace, pure grace, of mercy and pitty towards loſt ſinners. *The kindneſſe of God hath appeared*

peared, not by our works, but according to his abundant mercy shewed in Christ Jesus, Tit. 3, 4, 5. So then we have this purpose of Gods love unfolded to us in the Scriptures, and this is the substance of them, both old and new Testament, or the end of them, *Rom. 10. 4.* Christ is the end of the Law to all sinners, concluded under sin, and a curse by it, our Lord Jesus, the good *Ebedmelech*, comes and casts down a cord to us, and draws us up out of the pit of sin and misery, he comes to this prison; and opens the doors to let captives free, so then we have God holden out to us in Redeemer, as a repairer of our breaches, God in Christ reconciling the world, *O Israel thou hast destroyed thy self, but in me is thy help found*, Hos. 13. 9. *He finds to himself a ransome to satisfie his justice, Job. 33. 24.* He finds a propitiation to take away sin, a sacrifice to pacifie and appease his wrath, he finds one of our Brethren, but his own Son in whom he is well-pleased. And then holds out all this to sinners that they may be satisfied in their own consciences, as he is in his own mind; God hath satisfied himself in Christ, you have not that to do, he is not now to be reconciled to us, for he was never really at odds, though he covered his countenance with frowns, and threats since the fall, and hath appeared in fire and thunders, and whirlewind which are terrible, yet his heart had alwayes love in it to such persons, and therefore he is come near in Christ, and about reconciling us to himself, here is the businesse then to have our souls reconciled to him, to take away the enimity within us, and as he is satisfied with his Son, so to satisfie our selves with him, and be as well pleased in his Redemption and purchase, as the Father is, and then you beleeve indeed in him.

Now if this were accomplished, what have we more to do but to love him, and to live to him, when you have found in the Scripture, and believed with the heart, what man once was, and what he now is, what God once appeared, and what he now manifests himself in the Gospel, ye have no more to do but to search in the same Scriptures

what

what ye henceforth ought to be: Ye who find your eſtate recovered in Chriſt, aſk, *what manner of perſons ought we to be?* And the Scripture ſhall alſo give you that form of ſound words, which may not only teach you to believe in him, but to love him, and obey his commands: The Law that before condemned you, is now by Chriſt put in your hands to guide you, and conduct you in the way, and teacheth you how to live henceforth to his glory. *The grace of God that hath appeared to all men,* Tit. 2. 12. *teacheth us, that denying ungodlineſſe and worldly luſts, we ſhould live godly, and righteouſly, and ſoberly, in this preſent world.* Here is the ſumme of the rule of your practice and converſation, piety towards God, equity towards men, and ſobriety towards our ſelves, ſelf-deniall, and world-deniall, and luſt-deniall, to give up with the world, and our own luſts, henceforth to have no more to do with them, to reſign them, not for a time, not in part, but wholly and for ever in affection, and by parts in practice and endeavour, and then to reſign and give up our ſelves to him, to live to him, and live in him.

Thus we have given you a ſumme of the Doctrine of the Scriptures, of that which is to be beleeved, and that which is to be done as our duty. Now we ſhall ſpeak a word of theſe two Cardinall Graces, which are the compend of all graces: as the objects of them are the Abridgment of the Scriptures; *Faith* and *Love*, theſe ſound words can profite us nothing, unleſſe we hold them faſt with Faith and Love.

Faith is like the Fountain-grace, ſtreams come out of it that cleanſeth the Conſciences from the guilt of ſin, and puriſieth the heart from the filth of ſin, becauſe it is that which cometh to the *Fountain opened up in the houſe of David*, and draweth water out of theſe *wells of ſalvation*. If you conſider the fall and ruine of mankind, you will find infidelity and unbelief the fountain of it, as well as the ſeal of it. Unbelief of the Law of God, of his promiſes and threatnings: This was firſt called in queſtion, and when

once called in question, it is half denied. Hath God said so, that you shall die? Its not far off, you shall not surely die: Here then was the very beginning of mans ruine he did not retain in his knowledge, and believe with his heart the truth, and faithfulnesse, and holinesse of God; which unbelief was conjoyned, and intermingled with much pride, *you shall be as Gods:* he began to live out of God, in himself, not remembring that his life was a streame of that divine Fountain, that being cut off from it would dry up. Now therefore our Lord Jesus Christ, an expert Saviour, and very learned, and compleat for this work, he brings man up out of this pit of misery, by the same way he fell into it, he fell down by unbelief, and he brings him up out of it by Faith: This is the cord that is cast down to the poor soul in the dungeon, or rather his Faith is the dead-grip of the cord of divine promises, which are sent in to the captive prisoner, and by vertue whereof he is drawn out, into the light of salvation. Unbelief of the Law of God did first destroy man, now the belief of the Gospel saves him. The not believing of the Lords threatnings, was the beginning of his ruine, the believing of his precious promises, is his salvation. I say more, as our destruction began at the unbelief of the Law, so our salvation must begin at the belief of it. The Law and Divine Justice went out of his sight, and so he sinned; now the Law entering into the Conscience, discovers a mans sin, and makes sins abound, and that is the beginning of our remedie, to know our disease. But as long as this is hid from a mans eyes, he is shut up in unbelief, he is sealed and confirmed in his miserable estate, and so kept from Jesus Christ the remedy. Thus unbeleef first and last destroyes; Faith might have preserved *Adam*, and Faith again may restore thee, who hath fallen in *Adam*.

There is a great mistake of Faith among us, some taking it for a strong and blind confidence, that admits of no questions or doubts in the soul: and so vainly perswading themselves that they have it; and some again conceiving it

to be such an assurance of salvation, as instantly comforts the soul, and looseth all objections, and so foolishly vexing their own souls, and disquieting themselves in vain, for the want of that, which if they understood what it is, they would find they have it. I say, many souls conceive that to be the best Faith, that never doubted, and hath alwayes lodged in them, and kept them in peace since they were born. But seeing all men are once aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, and strangers to the Covenant of Promise, and without God in the world, and so without Christ also, it is certain that these souls who have alwayes blest themselves in their own hearts, and cried peace, peace, and were never afraid of the wrath to come, have imbraced an imagination and dream of their own heart, for true Faith. It is not big and stout words that will prove it; men may defy the devill and all his works, and speak very confidently, and yet, God knows they are captives by him, at his pleasure, and not far from that misery which they think they have escaped. Satan works in them with such a crafty conveyance, that they cannot perceive it, and how should they perceive it? For we are by nature dead in sins, and so cannot feel nor know that we are such: It is a token of life to feel pain, a certain token, for dead things are senslesse. You know how Jugglers may deceive your very senses, and make them beleeve they see that which is not, and feel that which they feel not: Oh how much more easie is it for Satan, such an ingenious and experimented spirit, assisted with the help of our deceitfull hearts, to cast such a mist over the eyes of hearts, and make them beleeve any thing, how easily may he hide our misery from us, and make us beleeve its well with us: And thus multitudes of souls perish, in the very opinion of salvation: that very thing which they call Faith, that strong ungrounded perswasion, its no other thing then the unbelief of the heart, unbelief, I mean of the holy law, of divine Justice, and the wrath to come: for if these once entred into the souls consideration, they would certainly cast down that

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of faith in the Goſpel, they think to beleeve in Chriſt
is nothing elſe, but never to be afraid of hell: whereas
is nothing elſe but a ſoul fleeing in to Chriſt for fear o
hell; and fleeing from the wrath to come to the city o
refuge.

Now again there are ſome other ſouls quite contrare-minded, that run upon an other extremity, they once queſtion whether they have Faith? And always queſtion it. You ſhall find them alwayes out of one doub into another, and ſtill returning upon theſe debates, whether am I in Chriſt or not? And often peremptorily concluding that they are not in him, and that they beleeve not in him: I muſt confeſſe that a ſoul muſt once queſtion the matter, or they ſhall never be certain, nay a ſoul muſt once conclude that it is void of God, and without Chriſt, but having diſcovered that, I ſee no more uſe and fruit of your frequent debates, and janglings about intereſt: I would ſay then unto ſuch ſouls, that if you now queſtion it, it is indeed the very time to put it out of queſtion. And how? Not by framing or ſeeking anſwers to your objections, not by ſearching into thy ſelf to find ſomething to prove it, not by more diſputing about it, for when ſhall theſe have an end? But ſimply and plainly by ſetting about that which is queſtioned. Are you in doubt, if you be believers? How ſhall it be reſolved then, but by beleeving indeed? It is now the very time thou art called to make application of thy ſoul to Chriſt, if thou thinkeſt that thou cannot make application of Chriſt to thy ſoul: If thou canno: know if he be thine, then how ſhall thou know it? But by chooſing him for thine, and imbracing him in thy ſoul: Now I ſay, if that time which is ſpent about ſuch unprofitable debates, were ſpent in ſolid and ſerious endeavours about the thing in debate, it would quickly,

ly, be out of debate, if you were more in the ſtudy of obedience to thoſe Commands, then in the diſpute whether you have obeyed or not, you would ſooner win to ſatisfaction in it. This I ſay rather, becauſe the weightier and principall parts of the Goſpel are thoſe direct acts of Faith and love to Jeſus Chriſt, both theſe are the outgoings of the ſoul to him, now again, Examination of our Faith and aſſurance, are but ſecondary and conſequent reflections upon our ſelves, and are the ſoul returning in again to it ſelf, to find what is within. Therefore I ſay a Chriſtian is principally called to the firſt, and alwayes called, it is the chief duty of man, which for no inevidence, no doubting, no queſtioning, ſhould be left undone: if ye be in any heſitation whether you are beleevers or not? I am ſure the cheefeſt thing, and moſt concerning is, rather to believe then to know it, it is a Chriſtians being to believe, its indeed his comfort and well-being to know it, but if you do not know it, then by all means ſo much the more ſet about it preſently, let the ſoul conſider Chriſt and the precious promiſes, and lay its weight upon him; This you ought to do, and not to leave the other undone.

2. Secondly, *I* ſay to ſuch ſouls, that it is the miſtake of the very nature of Faith that leads them to ſuch perplexities, and cauſeth ſuch inevidence: *It* is not ſo much the inevidence of marks, and fruits, that makes them doubt, as the very miſapprehenſion of the thing it ſelf, for as long as they miſtake it in its own nature, no ſign, no mark can ſatisfie in it. You take Faith to be a perſwaſion of Gods love, that calms and quiets the mind, now ſuch a perſwaſion needs no ſigns to know it by, it is manifeſt by its own preſence, as light by its own brightneſſe. It were a fooliſh queſtion to ask any how they knew that they were perſwaded of anothers affection, the very perſwaſion it ſelf maketh it ſelf more certain to the ſoul then any token. So then while you queſtion whether you have Faith or not, and in the mean time take Faith to be nothing elſe but ſuch a perſwaſion, it is in vain to bring

bring any marks or signs to convince you that you ha
Faith, for if such a perswasion and assurance were in yo
it would be more powerfull to assure your hearts of it sel
then any thing else, and while you are doubting of it, it i
more manifest that you have it not, then any signs o
marks can be able to make it appear that you have it. I
any would labour to convince a blind man that he sa
the light, and give him signs and tokens of the light
shining, the blind man could not believe him, for it i
more certain to himself that he sees not, then any evidenc
can make the contrary probable: You are still wishin
and seeking such a Faith as puts all out of question. No
when Ministers brings any marks to prove you have tru
Faith, it cannot satisfie or settle you, because your ver
questioning proves that ye have not that which ye question
if you had such a perswasion, you would not question it
so then, as long as you are in that mistake concerning
the true nature of Faith, all the signs of the word cannot
settle you.

But I say if once you understood the true nature of
Faith, it would be more clear in it self unto you, then
readily marks and signs could make it, especially in the
the time of tentation: If you would know then what it is
indeed, consider what the word of God holds out concer-
ning himself or us, and the solid belief of that in the heart
hath something of the nature of saving Faith in it. The
Lord gives a testimony concerning man, that he *is born*
in sin, that he is dead in sins, and all his imaginations are
only evill continnually. Now I say to receive this truth in-
to the soul upon Gods Testimony, is a point of Faith,
the Lord in his word concludes all under sin and wrath,
so then, for a soul to conclude it self also under sin and
wrath, is a point of Faith: Faith is the souls testimony to
Gods truth, the word is Gods Testimony, now then, if a
soul receive this testimony within, whether it be Law or
Gospell, its an act of Faith, if a soul condemn it self, and
judge it self, that is a setting to our Seal that God is
true,

ue, who speaks in his Law and so its a beleeving in God. I y more, to beleeve with the heart, that we cannot beleeve, s a great point of sound beleef, because its a sealing of at word of God, *the heart is desperatly wicked, and of selves we can do nothing.* Now I am perswaded if such uls knew this, they would put an end to their many con- ntions and wranglings about this point, and would ra- her blesse God that hath opened their eyes to see them- lves, then contend with him, for that they have no aith: It is light only that discovers darkneſſe, and Faith nly that discerns unbeleef: its life and health only that eels pain and ſickneſſe, for if all were alike nothing could e found, as in dead bodies: Now *I* say to such ſouls s beleeves in God the Law-giver, beleeve also in Christ the Redeemer, and what is that? *Its not to know* hat I have intereſt in him, no, that muſt come after, its he Spirits ſealing after beleeving which puts it ſelf out of ueſtion, when it comes, and ſo if you had it, you needed not many ſigns to know it by, at leſt you would not doubt of it, more then he that ſees the light can queſtion it. But *I* ſay, to beleeve in Christ is ſimply this, I, whatſoever *I* be; ungodly, wretched, polluted, deſperate, am willing to have Jeſus Christ for my Saviour, *I* have no other help, or hope, if it be not in him, it is I ſay, to lean the weight of thy ſoul on this foundation-ſtone laid in Zion, to embrace the promiſes of the Gospel albeit generall, as *worthy of all acceptation*, and wait upon the performance of them, it is no other thing, but to make Christ welcome, to ſay, even ſo, Lord Jeſus, I am content in my ſoul that thou be my Saviour, *to be found in thee, not having my own righteouſneſſe*, I am well pleaſed to caſt away my own as dung, and finds my ſelf no other nor an ungodly man. Now it is certain that many ſouls that are ſtill queſtioning whether they have Faith, yet do find this in their ſouls, but becauſe they know not that it is Faith which they find, they [illegible] about to ſeek that which is not Faith, and where it is not to be found and ſo diſquiet themſelves in vain, and hinders fruitfulneſſe.

Now the Faith of a Christian is no fancy, its no light vain imagination of the brain, but it dwells in the heart with the heart man believs, and it dwells with love. Faith and love we need not be curious to distinguish them, it is certain that love is in it, and from it, its in the very bosome of it, because faith is a soul embracing of Christ, in a choosing of him for its portion, and then upon the receipt of this goodly portion, and from consideration of what he is, and hath done for us, the soul loves him still more, and is impatient of so much distance from him. We find them conjoined in Scripture, but they are one in the heart. O that we studied to have these jointly engraven on the heart, as they are joined in the word, so our heart should be a living Epistle: Faith and love are two words, but one thing under different notions: they are the outgoings of the soul to Christ for life, the breathings of the soul after him, for more of him, when it hath once tasted how good he is: Faith is not a speculation, or a wondring thought of truth, its the truth not captivated into the mind, but dwelling in the heart, and getting possession of the whole man: you know a man and his will are one, not so a man and his mind, for he may conceive the truth of many things he loves not, but whatever a man loves, that and he in a manner becomes one with another: Love is unitive, its the most excellent union of distant things. The will commands the whole man, and hath the office of applying all the faculties to their proper works, *Illa imperat aliæ exequuntur*, therefore when once divine truth gets entry into the heart of a man, and becomes one with his will and affection, it will quickly command the whole man to practise and execute, and then he that received the truth in love, is found a walker in the truth: many persons captivate truth in their understandings, as the Gentiles did, they held or detained it in unrighteousnesse, but because it hath no liberty to descend into the heart, and possesse that Gaol, it cannot command the man. But O its better to be truths captive, then to captivate truth, saith the Apostle,

ye obeyed from the heart the truth to which ye were delivered, Rom. 6 O a blessed captivity, to be delivered over to truth, that is indeed freedom, for truth makes free, *Joh. 8.* And it makes free where it is in freedom, give it freedom to command thee, & it shal indeed deliver thee from all strange lords, and thou shalt obey it from the heart, when it is indeed in the heart, when the truth of God, whether promises, or threatnings, or commands, are impressed into thy heart, you shall find the expression of them in the conversation: Faith is not an emptie assent to the truth, but a receiving of it in love, and when the truth is received in love, then it begins to work by love, *Faith works by love*, saith *Paul, Gal. 5. 6.* That now is the proper nature of its operation, which expresses its own nature, obedience proceeding from love to God, flowes from Faith in God, and that shews the true and living nature of that Faith: If the soul within receive the Seal and impression of the truth of God, it will render the image of that same truth in all its actions.

Love is put for all obedience, its made the very summe and compend of the Law, the fulfilling of it, for the truth is, its the most effectuall and constraining principle of obedience, and withall the most sweet and pleasant: *The love of Christ constrains us* to live to him, and not henceforth to our selves, 2 *Cor.* 5. 15. As I said a man and his will is one, if you ingage it, you bind all, if you gain it, it will bring all with it. As it is the most ready way to gain any party to ingage their head whom they follow, and upon whom they depend; let a mans love be once gained to Christ, and the whole train of the soules faculties, of the outward senses, and operations will follow upon it: It was an excellent and pertinent question that Christ asked Peter, when he was going away, if *Peter* had considered Christs purpose in it, he would not have been so hasty and displeased, *Peter loves thou me, then feed my sheep?* If a man love Christ he will carefully study to please him, and though he should never do so much in o-

bedience, its no pleasure except it be done out of love: O this, and more of this in the heart, would make Ministers feed well, and teach well, and would make people obey well: *If ye love me keep my commands*: Love devots and consecrats all that is in a man, to the pleasure of him whom he loves; therefore it fashions and conforms one even against nature to anothers humor and affection: it constrains not to live to our selves, but to him, its joy and delight is in him, and therefore all is given up and resigned to him: Now as it is certain that if you love much you will do much so its certain that little is accepted for much, that proceeds from love, and therefore our poor maimed and halting obedience, is called the *fulfilling of the Law*, he is well-pleased with it, because love is ill-pleased with it, love thinks nothing too much, all too little, and therefore his love thinks any thing from us much, since love would give more, he accepts that which is given, the lovers mite cast into the treasure, is more then ten times so much outward obedience from another man; He meets love with love, if the souls desire be towards the love of his name, if love offer though a farthing, his love receiving it, counts it a Crown, love offering a present of duty, finds many imperfections in it, and covers any good that is in it, seems not to regard it, and then behold as a recompence; his love receiving the present from us, covers a multitude of infirmities that are in it: And thus what in the desire and endeavour of love on our part, and what in the acceptation of what is done on his part, love is the fulfilling of the Law. Its an usuall proverb, *all things are as they are taken*, love is the fulfilling of the Law, because our loving Father taks it so, he takes as much delight in the poor childrens willingnesse, as in the more ageds strength, the offer and endeavour of the one pleas him as well as the performance of the other.

The love of God is the fulfilling of the Law, for it is a living Law, it is the Law written on the heart, it is the

Law

Law of a Spirit of life within, *Quis legem det amantibus, major lex amor sibi ipsi est.* You almost need not prescribe any rules, or set over the head of love, the authority and pain of a command, for it is a greater Law to it self, it hath within its own bosome as deep an ingagement and obligation to any thing that may please God, as you can put upon it; for it is in it self the very ingagement and bond of the soul to him. This it is indeed which will do him service, and that is the service which he likes: it is that only serves him constantly and pleasantly, and constantly it cannot serve him, which doth it not pleasantly, for it is delight only that makes it constant. Violent motions may be swift, but not durable, they last not long: fear and terrour is a kind of externall impulse, that may drive a soul swiftly to some dusie, but because that is not one with the soul, it cannot endure long, its not good company to the soul. But love making a duty pleasant, becomes one with the soul, it incorporats with it, and becomes like its nature to it, that though it should not move so swiftly, yet it moves more constantly. And what is love but the very motion of the soul to God? and so till it have attained that, to be in him, it can find no place of rest. Now this is only the service that he is pleased with which comes from love, because he sees his own Image in it: for love in us, its nothing else but the impression and stamp that Gods love to us makes on the heart, its the very reflection of that sweet warm beam, so then when his love reflects back unto himself, carrying our heart and duty with it, he knoweth his own superscription, he loves his own Image in such a duty: *He that loveth me, and continueth in my love I will love him, and I and my Father will come and make our abode with him,* Joh. 14. 23. Here now is an evidence that he likes it, for he must needs like that place he chooses to dwell into, he who hath such a glorious Mansion, and Palace above, he must needs love that soul dearly that he will prefer it to his high and holy place.

Now I know it will be the secret question and com-

plaint of some souls, How shall I get love to God? I cannot love him, my heart is so desperatly wicked, I cannot say as *Peter*, *Lord thou knowest that I love thee.* I shall not insist upon the discovery of your love unto you by marks and signs, only I say, if thou indeed from thy heart desires to love him, and art grieved that there is not this love in thy soul to him, which becomes so love-worthy a Saviour, then thou indeed lovest him, for he that loveth the love of God, loveth God himself: And wherefore art thou sad for want of that love, but because thou lovest him in some measure, and wishest finds him beyond all that thou can think and love: But I say, that which most concerns thee is, to love still more, and that thou would be more earnest to love him, then to know that thou loves him.

Now I know no more effectuall way to increase love to Jesus Christ, then to beleeve his love. Christ Jesus is the Author and Finisher both of Faith and Love, and wee love him, because he first loved us. Therefore the right discovery of Jesus Christ, what he is, and what he hath done for sinners, is that which will of all things most prevail, to ingage the soul unto him: But as long as ye suspend your Faith upon the being, or increase of your love, and obedience (as the manner of too many is) you take even such a course as he that will not plant the Tree till he see the fruits of it; which is contrary to common sense and reason.

Since this then is the summe of true Religion, to believe in Christ, and to love him, and so live to him, we shall wind up all that is spoken, into that exhortation of the Apostles, *Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard.* You have this Doctrine of Faith and Love delivered unto you, which may be able to save your souls: then I beseech you hold them fast, salvation is in them, they are sound words, and wholesome words, words of life, spirit and life (as Christ speaks) as well as words of Truth: But how will you hold them fast that have them

not

not at all, that know them not though you hear them? you who are ignorant of the Goſpel, and hear nothing but a ſound of words, in ſtead of ſound and wholſome words, how can you hold them faſt? Can a man hold the wind in the hollow of his hand, or keep in a ſound within it; you know no more but a ſound, and a wind that paſſeth by your ear, without obſerving either truth or life in it. But then again, you who underſtand theſe ſound words, and have a form of knowledge, and of the Letter of the Law, what will that avail you? You cannot hold it faſt except you have it within you, and it is within you indeed when it is in your heart, when the form of it is ingraven upon the very ſoul in love. Now though you underſtand the ſound of theſe words, and the ſound of truth in them, yet you receive not the living Image of them, which is Faith and Love. Can you paint a ſound, can you form it, or engrave it on any thing? Nay, but theſe ſound words are more ſubſtantiall and ſolid, they muſt be engraven on the heart, elſe you will never hold them, they can be eaſily plucked out of thy mouth, and hand, by temptation, unleſſe they be incloſed, and laid up in the ſecret of the heart, as *Mary* laid them. The truth muſt hold thee faſt, or thou cannot hold it faſt, it muſt captivat thee, and bind thee with the Golden Chains of affection, which only is true freedom, or certainly thou will let it go. Nay, you muſt not only have the truth received by love into your heart but as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, you muſt alſo *hold faſt the form of ſound words.* Scripture-*words* are *ſound words*, the Scriptures method of teaching is ſound and wholſome: There may be unſound words uſed in expreſſing true matter, and if a man ſhall give liberty to his own luxurant imagination, to expatiat in notions, and expreſſions, either to catch the ear of the vulgar, or to appear ſome new diſcoverer of light, and Goſpel-myſteries, he may as readily fall into error and darkneſſe, as into truth and light. Some men do buſk up old truths, Scripture-truths, into ſome new dreſſe of language,

language, and notions, and then gives them out for new discoveries, new lights, but in so doing, they often hazard the losing of the truth it self. We would beware and take heed of *strange* words that have the least appearance of evil, such as *Christed*, and *Godded*, let us think it enough to believe according to the Scriptures, and suspect all that is vain, empty, unsound, that tends not to the increase of Faith in Christ, and love and obedience unto him. And ordinarily the Dialect of these called Antinomians is, giving and not granting that they had no unsound mind, yet I am sure they use unsound words to expresse sound matter; the cloaths should be shaped to the person, truth is plain and simple, let words of truth also be full of simplicity. I say no more, but leaves that upon you, that you hold fast even the very words of the Scriptures, and be not bewitched by the vain pretentions of *Spirit*, *all Spirit*, *pure and spirituall service*, and such-like, to the casting off, of the word of truth, as *Letter*, as *Flesh*, and such is the high attainment of some in these dayes, an high attainment indeed, and a mighty progresse in the way to destruction, the very last discovery of that Antichrist and Man of Sin. Oh, make much of the Scripture, for you shall neither read nor hear the like of it in the world: Other Books may have sound matter, but there is still something in manner or words unsound; no man can speak to you truth in such plainnesse and simplicity, in such soundnesse also. But here is both sound matter, and sound words, the truth holden out truly, health and salvation holden out in as wholsome a manner as is possible. Matter and manner are both divine.

EXOD. 3. 13, 14. *When they ſhall ſay unto me. What is his Name? What ſhall I ſay? And God ſaid, I AM THAT I AM.*

WEE are now about this Queſtion, What God is? But who can anſwer it, or if anſwered, who can underſtand it? It ſhould aſtoniſh us in the very entry, to think that we are about to ſpeak and to hear of his Majeſty, *whom eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of any creature to conſider what he is.* Think ye that blind men could have a pertinent diſcourſe of light and collours, would they form any ſuteable notion of that they had never ſeen, and cannot be known but by ſeeing? What an ignorant ſpeech would a deaf man make of ſounds, which a man cannot ſo much as know what it is, but by hearing of it? How then can we ſpeak of God who dwells in ſuch inacceſſible light, that though we had our eyes opened, yet they are far leſſe proportioned to that reſplendent brightneſſe, then a blind eye is to the Suns light?

It uſes to be a queſtion if there be a God, or how it may be known that there is a God? It were almoſt blaſphemy to move ſuch a Queſtion, if there were not ſo much Atheiſm in the hearts of men, which makes us either to doubt, or not firmly to believe, and ſeriouſly to conſider it. But what may convince ſouls of the Divine Majeſty? Truly I think if it be not evident by its own brightneſſe, all the reaſon that can be brought, is but like a candles light to ſee the Sun by. Yet becauſe of our weakneſſe, the Lord ſhines upon us in the Creatures, as in a Glaſſe, and this is become the beſt way to take up the glorious brightnes of his Majeſty, by reflection in his Word and Works. God himſelf dwels in light inacceſſible, that no man can approach unto; if any look ſtraight to that Sun of Righteouſneſſe, he ſhall be aſtoniſhed, and amazed, and ſee

no

no more then in the very darkneſſe: But the beſt way to behold the Sun, is to look upon it in a Pale of Water, and the ſureſt way to know God by, is to take him up in a ſtate of humiliation and condeſcention, as the Sun in the Rainbow, in his Word and Works, which are the mirrours of his Divine Power and Goodneſſe, and do reflect upon the hearts and eyes of all men, the Beams of that inacceſſible Light: If this be not the ſpeech, that *day uttereth unto day, and night unto night*, one ſelf-being gave me a being; and if thou hear not that language that is gone out into all the earth, and be not, as it were, noiſed and poſſeſſed with all the ſounds of every thing about thee, above thee, beneath thee, yea, and within thee, all ſinging a melodious ſong to that excellent Name which is above all names, and conſpiring to give teſtimony to the fountain of their being; if this *I ſay*, be not ſo ſenſible unto thee, as if a tongue and a voice were given to every creature to expreſſe it, then indeed we need not reaſon the buſineſſe with thee that haſt loſt thy ſenſes, do but *I ſay*, retire inwardly, and ſit in ſobriety and ſadneſſe, what thy conſcience thinks of it! And undoubtedly it ſhall confeſſe a Divine Majeſty, at leaſt tremble at the apprehenſion of what it either will not confeſs, or ſtenderly believes: The very evidence of truth ſhall extort an acknowledgment from it. If any man denied the Divine Majeſty, I would ſeek no other Argument to perſwade him, then what was uſed to convince an old Philoſopher, who denied the fire, they put his hand in it till he found it; ſo I ſay, return within to thy own conſcience, and thou ſhall find the ſcrotching heat of that Divine Majeſty burning it up whom thou would not confeſſe. There is an inward feeling and ſenſe of God that is imprinted in every ſoul by nature, that leaves no man without ſuch a teſtimony of God that makes him without excuſe: there is no man ſo impious, ſo atheiſtical, but whether he will or not, he ſhall feel at ſome times that which he loves not to know or conſider of, ſo that what reſt ſecure conſciences have from the fear and terror of God, it is

like the sleep of a drunken man, who even when he sleeps does not rest quietly.

Now although this inward stamp of a Deity be ingraven in the mindes of all, and every creature without have some marks of his glory stamped on them, so that all things a man can behold above him, or about him, or beneath him, the most mean and inconsiderable creatures are pearles and transparent stones that casts abroad the bee rayes of that glorious brightnesse which shines on them, as if a man were inclosed into a city builded all of precious stones, that in the Sun-shine all and every parcell of it, the streets, the houses, the roofs, the windows, all of it, reflected into his eyes, those Sun-beams in such a manner, as if all had been one mirror, though *I* say this be so, yet such is the blockishnesse and stupidity of men that they do not for all this consider of the glorious Creator, so that all these lamps seems to be lighted in vain, to show forth his glory, which though they do every way display their beams upon us, that we can turn our eye no where, but such a ray shall penetrate it, yet we either do not consider it, or the consideration of it takes not such deep root as to lead home to God, therefore the Scripture calls all naturall men atheists, *they have said in their heart there is no God, Psal.* 14. 1. All men almost confesse a God with their mouth and think they beleeve in him, but alas, behold their actions, and hearts what testimony they give, for a mans walking and conversation is like an eye-witnesse, that one of them deserves more credit then ten ear witnesses of professiones, *plus valet oculatus unus, quam auriti decem.* Now I may ask at you, what would ye do, how would ye walk if ye believed there were no God, would ye be more dissolute and prophane, and more void of religion, would not humane Lawes bind you as much in that case as they now do? For that is almost all the restraint that is upon many, the fear of temporall punishment, or shame among men; see your walking beside a heathens conversation, and save that you say ye beleeve in the true God, and he denies him, there

there is no difference, your transgressions speaks louder than your professions *that there is no fear of God before your eyes* *Psal.* 36. 1. Your practise belies your profession, *you profess that you know God, but in works you deny him*, saith *Paul*, Tit. 1. 16. *Ore quod dicitis opere negatis.* In these words read in your audience, you have a strange question and a strange answer; a question of *Moses*, and an answer of God: The occasion of it was the Lords giving to *Moses* a strange and uncouch Message, he was giving him Commission to go and speak to a King to dismiss and let go 600000. of his Subjects, and to speak to a numerous Nation, to depart from their own dwellings, and come out whether the Lord should lead them. Might not *Moses* then say within himself, Who am I, to speak such a thing to a King? Who am I, to lead out such a mighty people? Who will believe that thou hast sent me? Will not all men call me a deceiver, an Enthysiasticall Fellow, that takes upon me such a thing? Well then, saith *Moses* to the Lord, Lord, when I shall say that the God of their fathers sent me, unto them, they will not beleeve me, they have now forgotten thy Majesty, and thinks that thou art but even like the vanities of the nations, they cannot know their own portion from other nations vain idols, which they have given the same name unto, and calls Gods as well as thou art called: Now therefore sayes he when they ask me what thy proper name is by which thou art distinguished from all Idols, and all the works of thine own hands, and of mens hands, What shall I say unto them? Here is the Question, But why asks thou my Name, saith the Lord to *Jacob*, *Gen.* 32. 29. Importing that it is a high presumption, and bold curiosity to search such a wonder; Ask not my name saith the Angel to *Manoah*, for it is secret or wonderfull, *Judg.* 13. 18. Its a mystery, a dark hidden mystery, not for want of light, but for too much light, its a secret, its wonderfull, out of the reach of all created capacity. *Thou shalt call his name wonderfull*, *Isai* 9 6. What name can expresse that incomprehensible

omprehenſible Majeſty, the minde is more comprehen-ve then words, but the minde and ſoul is too narrow conceive him, O then how ſhort a garment muſt all ords, the moſt ſignificant and comprehenſive and ſuper-ative words be? Solomons ſoul and heart was inlarged s the ſand on the ſea, but O its not large enough for the reator of it. What is his Name, or what is his Sons Name, if thou canſt tell, *Prov* 30. 4. The Lord him-elf cannot expreſſe it to our capacity, becauſe we are not apable of what he can expreſſe, much leſſe of what he is, f he ſhould ſpeak to us of himſelf as he is, O it ſhould be ark ſayings, bid from the underſtandings of all living, we could reach no more of it, but that it is a wonder, a ſecret: here is the higheſt attainment of our knowledge, to know here is ſome myſtery in it, but not what that myſtery is, Chriſt hath a Name above all names, how then can we know that name? It was well ſaid by ſome of old, *Deus eſt πολυωνυμος* and yet *ανωνυμος multorum nominum & tamen nullius nominis*, he hath all Names, and yet he hath no name: *quia eſt omnia, & tamen nihil omnium*, becauſe he is all in all and yet none of all; *Deus eſt quod vides & quod non vides*; you may call him by all the works of his hands, for theſe are beams of his increated light, and ſtreams of his inexhauſtible ſea of goodneſſe, ſo that whatever perfection is in them, all that is eminently, yea, infinitly in him; Therefore ſaith Chriſt, *there is one Good, even God*; and he calls himſelf the light, and life, and therefore you have ſo many Names of God in Scripture, there is no quality, no property or vertue that hath the leaſt ſhadow of good-neſſe, but he is that eſſentially, really, eternally, and principally; So that the creature deſerves not ſuch names, but as they participat of his fulneſſe, he is the true light, the true life, the Sun is not that true light, though it give light to the Moon, and to men, for it borrows its light and ſhining from him; all creatures are, and ſhine but by re-flection; Therefore theſe names do agree to them but by a Metaphor (ſo to ſpeak) the propriety and truth of them

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is in him, as it is but a borrowed kind of ſpeech, to call picture, or image, a man, only becauſe of the repreſentation and likeneſſe to him, it communicates in one name with him. Even ſo (in ſome manner) the creatures are but ſome ſhadows, pictures, or reſemblances and equivocall ſhapes of God, and whatever name they have, of good, wiſe, ſtrong, beautifull, true, or ſuch like, its but a borrowed ſpeech from God, whoſe Image they have, and yet poore vain man would be wiſe, thought wiſe really, intrinſecally in himſelf and properly, and calls himſelf ſo; which is as great an abuſe of language, as if the picture ſhould call it ſelf a true and living man. Be then as you may call him all things, becauſe he is eminently and gloriouſly all that is in all, the fountain and end of all, yet we muſt again deny that he is any of theſe things, *unus omnia, & nihil omnium*; we can find no name to him, for what can ye call him, when you have ſaid he is light? you can form no other notion of him but from the reſemblance of this created light, but alas, that he is not, he ſo infinitly tranſcends that, and is diſtant from it, as if he had never made it according to his likeneſſe. His Name is above all theſe names, but what it is, himſelf knowes, and knowes only: If ye aſk what he is, we may glance at ſome notions, and expreſſions, to hold him out in relation to the creatures, we may call him Creator, Redeemer, light, life, omnipotent, good, mercifull, juſt, and ſuch like: But if you aſk what is his proper Name in relation to himſelf, *ipſe novit*, himſelf knows that, we muſt be ſilent, and ſilence in ſuch a ſubject is the rareſt eloquence.

But let us here what the Lord himſelf ſpeaks, in anſwer to this Queſtion, if any can tell, ſure he himſelf knows his own Name beſt; *I am* (ſaith he) *what I am, ſum qui ſum*, go tell them that, *I am* hath ſent thee: A ſtrange Anſwer, but an Anſwer only pertinent for ſuch a Queſtion: What ſhould *Moſes* make of this? What is he the wiſer of his aſking? Indeed he might be the wiſer, he might

might teach him more by ſilence, then all Humane Eloquence could inſtruct him by ſpeaking: His queſtion was curious, and behold an anſwer ſhort and dark, to confound vain and preſumptuous mortality. *I am what I am*, an anſwer that does not ſatisfie curioſity, for it leaves room for the firſt queſtion, *and what art thou?* But abundant to ſilence faith and ſobriety, that it ſhall ask no more, but ſit down and wonder.

There are three things I conceive imported in this Name, Gods *unſearchableneſſe*, Gods *unchangeableneſſe*, and Gods *abſoluteneſſe*. His *ineffability*, his *eternity*, and his *ſoveraignty*, and *independent ſubſiſtence*, upon whom all other things depend.

I ſay, 1. His unſearchableneſs, you know, it is our manner of ſpeech when we would cover any thing from any, and not anſwer any thing diſtinctly to them, we ſay, it is what it is, I have ſaid what *I* have ſaid, I will not make you wiſe of it. Here then is the fitteſt notion you can take up God into, to find him unſearchable beyond all underſtanding, beyond all ſpeaking; the more ye ſpeak or think, to find him alwayes beyond what ye ſpeak or think, what ever you diſcover of him, to conceive that infiniteneſſe is beyond that, *ad finem cujus per tranſiri non poteſt*, the end of which you cannot reach, that he is an unmeaſurable depth, a boundleſſe Ocean of perfection, that you can neither ſownd the bottom of it, nor find the breath of it? Can a Child wad the Sea, or take it up in the hollow of its hand? when ever any thing of God is ſeen, he is ſeen a wonder, *wonderfull* is the Name he is known by: All our knowledge reacheth no further then admiration, *Who is like unto thee? Exod.* 15. 11. *Pſal.* 89. 6, 7. and admiration ſpeaks ignorance. The greateſt attainment of knowledge reacheth but ſuch a Queſtion as this, *Who is like to thee?* To know only that he is not like any other thing that we know, but not to know what he is? And the different degrees of knowledge is but in more admiration or leſſe as his unconceivableneſſe,

neſſe, and in more or leſſe affection expreſſed in ſuch pathetick Interrogations, *O who is like the Lord?* How excellent is his Name? Here is the greateſt degree of Saints knowledge here-away, to ask with admiration and affection ſuch a Queſtion, that no anſwer can be given to, or none that we can conceive or underſtand, ſo as to ſatisfie wondering, but ſuch as ſtill more increaſeth it. There is no other ſubject, but you may exceed it in apprehenſions, and in expreſſions: O how often are mens ſongs, and thoughts, and diſcourſes above the matter? But here is a ſubject that there is no exceſs into, nay, there is no acceſs unto it, let be exceſs in it; imagination that can tranſcend the created Heavens and Earth, and fancy to it ſelf millions of new worlds, every one exceeding another, and all of them exceeding this in perfection, yet it can do nothing here, that which at one inſtant can paſſe from the one end of Heaven to the other, walk about the circumference of the Heavens, and travel over the breadth of the Sea, yet it can do nothing here. *Canſt thou by ſearching find out God? Job.* 11. imagination cannot travell in theſe bounds, for his center is *every where*, and his circumference *no where*, as an old Philoſopher ſpeaks of God, *Deus eſt cujus centrum eſt ubique, circumferentia nuſquam*, how ſhall it then find him out? There is nothing ſure here but to loſe our ſelves in a myſtery, and to follow his Majeſty till we be ſwallowed up with an *Oh altitudo*, O the depth, and height, and length and breadth of God! O the depth of his wiſdom! O the height of his power! O the breadth of his love! And O the length of his Eternity! Its not reaſon and diſputation, ſaith *Barnard*, will comprehend theſe, but holineſſe and that by ſtretching out the armes of fear and love, reverence and affection, What more dreadfull, then power that cannot be reſiſted, and wiſdom that none can be hid from, and what more lovely then the love wherewith he hath ſo loved us, and his unchangeableneſſe which admits of no ſuſpition? O fear him who hath a hand that doth all,

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and an eye that beholds all things, and love him who hath ſo loved us, and cannot change, God hath been the ſubject of the diſcourſes and debates of men in all ages, but Oh, *Quam longe eſt in rebus qui eſt tam Communis in vocibus?* How little a a portion hath men underſtood of him? How hath he been hid from the eyes of all living. Every age muſt give this teſtimony of him, *we have heard of his fame*, but *he is hid from the eyes of all living*. I think that Philoſopher that took it to his adviſement, ſaid more in ſilence then all men have done in ſpeaking. *Simonides* being asked by *Hiero* a King, What God was? Sought a day to deliberat in, and think upon it, when the King ſought an account of his meditation about it, he deſired yet two dayes more, and ſo as oft as the King asked him, he ſtill doubled the number of the dayes in which he might adviſe upon it, the King wondering at this, asked what he meaned by thoſe delayes? Saith he, *Quanto magis conſidero, tanto magis obſcurior mihi videtur*, the more I think on him, he is the more dark and unknown to me: This was more reall knowledge then many ſubtill diſputations of theſe men, who by their poor ſhell of finite capacity, and reaſon, preſume to empty the ocean of Gods infiniteneſſe, by finding out anſwers to all the objections of carnall reaſon, againſt all theſe myſteries and riddles of the Diety; I profeſſe, I know nothing can ſatisfie reaſon in this buſineſſe, but to lead it captive to the obedience of Faith, and to ſilence it with the ſaith of a myſtery which we know not, *Pauls* anſwer is one for all, and better then all the Syllogiſmes of ſuch men, *what art thou O man who diſputeſt?* Diſput thou, I will beleeve. *Ut intelligatur tacendum eſt*, ſilence only can get ſome account of God, quiet and humble ignorance in the admiration of ſuch a Majeſty, is the profoundeſt knowledge. *Non eſt mirum ſi ignoretur, majoris eſſet admirationis ſi ſciatur.* It is no wonder that God is not known, all the wonder were to know and comprehend ſuch a wonder, ſuch a myſtery; it is a wonder indeed, that he is

not more known, but when *I* ſay ſo, I mean that he is not more wondred at, becauſe he is paſſing knowledge. If our eyes of fleſh cannot ſee any thing almoſt when they look ſtraight and ſtedfaſtly upon the Sun, O what can the eye of the ſoul behold when it is fixed upon the conſideration of that ſhining and glorious Majeſty, will not that very light be as darkneſſe to it, that it ſhall be as it were darkned and dazled with a thick miſt of light, *in ſuperlucentie caligine*, confounded with that reſplendent darkneſſe. *Its* ſaid that the *Lord covers himſelf with light as with a garment*, and yet *clouds and darkneſſe are about him, and he makes darkneſſe his covering*, *Pſal.* 18. 9. 10. 12. His inacceſſible light is this glorious darkneſſe, that ſtrikes the eyes of men blind, as in the darkneſſe, the Suns light is the night-owles night and darkneſſe, when a ſoul can find no better way to know him by, then by theſe names and notions by which we deny our own knowledge, when it hath conceived all of him it can, then as being overcome with that dazling brightneſſe of his glory, to think him inconceiveable, and to expreſſe him in ſuch terms as withall expreſſes our ignorance: There is no name agrees more to God, then that which ſaith we cannot name him, we cannot know him, ſuch as, *inviſible*, *incomprehenſible*, *infinit*, *&c.* This *Socrates* an heathen, profeſt to be all his knowledge, that he knew he did know nothing, and therefore he preached an unknown god to the *Athenians*, to whom after they erected an Altar with that inſcription, *To the unknown God.* I confeſſe indeed the moſt part of our diſcourſes, of our performances, have ſuch a writing on them, *to the unknown God*, becauſe we think we know him, and ſo we know nothing; But O that Chriſtians had ſo much knowledge of God, ſo much true wiſdom, as ſolidly, and willingly to confeſſe in our ſouls our own ignorance of him, and then I would deſire no other knowledge, and growing in the grace of God, but to grow more and more in the beleeving ignorance of ſuch a myſtery, in the knowledge of an unknown, unconceivable,

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and unsearchable God, that in all the degrees of knowledge we might still conceive we had found leſſe, and that there is more to be found then before we apprehended. This is the moſt perfect knowledge of God, that doth not drive away darkneſſe but increaſe it in the ſouls apprehenſion, any increaſe in it doth not declare what God is, or ſatisfy ones admiration in it, but rather ſhews him to be more invisible and insearchable; ſo that the darkneſſe of a ſoules ignorance is more manifeſted by this light, and not more covered, and ones own knowledge is rather darkened and diſappears in the glorious appearance of this light, for in all new diſcoveries, there is no other thing appears but that this which the ſoul is ſeeking is ſupereminently unknown, and ſtill further from knowledge then ever it conceived it to be. Therefore whatever you conceive or ſee of God, if ye think ye know what ye conceive and ſee, its not God ye ſee, but ſomething of Gods, leſſe then God, for its ſaid, *eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered in, to the heart of man to conſider, what he hath laid up for them that love him:* Now certainly thats himſelf, he hath laid up for them, therefore what ever thou conceive of him, and thinks now thou knows him, that is not he, for he hath not entred in mans heart to conceive him. Therefore this muſt be thy ſouls exerciſe and progreſſe in it, to remove all things, all conceptions from him, as not beſeeming his Majeſty, and to go ſtill forward in ſuch a dark negative diſcovery, till thou know not where to ſeek him, nor find him next. *Si quis Deum videat & intelligat quod vidit Deum non vidit*, if any ſee God, and underſtand what they ſee, God they do not ſee, for *God hath no man ſeen*, 1 Joh 4. 12. *And do man knows the Father but the Son*, and none knows the Son but the Father, its his own property to know himſelf, as *to be himſelf*, ſilent and ſeeing ignorance, is our faſteſt and higheſt knowledge.

EXOD. 3. 14. *I AM THAT I AM.*
PSAL. 19. 2. *Before the Mountains*, &c. *from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.*
JOB 11. 7, 8, 9. *Canst thou by searching find out God*, &c.

THis is the chief point of saving knowledge, to know God: And this is the first point or degree of the true knowledge of God, to discern how ignorant we are of him, and find him beyond all knowledge: The Lord gives a definition of himself, but such a one as is no more clear then himself to our capacities, a short one indeed, and you may think it sayes not much *I am*; What is it that may not say so? I am that I am, the least and most inconsiderable creature hath its own being, mens wisdome would have learned him to call himself by some high stiles, and titles as the manner and customs of Kings and Princes is, and such as the flattery of men attributes unto them; you would think the superlatives of wise, good, strong, excellent, glorious, and such like, were more beseeming his Majesty, and yet there is more Majesty in the simple stile, then in all others, but a naturall man cannot behold it, for it is spiritually discerned. *Let the pot-sheards of the earth* (saith he) *strive with the pot-sheards of the earth*, Isai. 45. 9. *But let them not strive with their Maker.* So I say, let creatures compare with creatures, let them take superlative stiles, in regard of others, let some of them be called good, and some better, in the comparison among themselves, but God must not enter in the comparison. *Paul* thinks it an odious comparison, to compare present crosses to eternall glory, *I think them not worthy to be compared*, saith *Paul*, *Rom.* 8. But how much more odious is it, to compare God with creatures. Call him Highest, call him most Powerfull, call him most Excellent, Almighty, most Glorious in respect of Creatures,

cures, you do but abase his Majesty, to bring it down to any terms of comparison with them, which is beyond all the bounds of understanding; all these do but expresse him to be in some degree eminently seated above the creatures, as some creatures are above all others, so you do no more but make him the Head of all, as some one creature is the head of one line or kind under it; but what is that to his Majesty? He speaks otherwayes of himself, *Isai. 40.17. All Nations are before him as nothing, and they are accounted to him lesse then nothing.* Then certainly you have not taken up the true notion of God, when you have conceived him the most eminent of all beings, as long as any being appears as a being in his sight, before whom all beings conjoined, are as nothing, while you conceive God to be the best, you still attribute something to the creature, for all Comparatives includes the Positive in both extreams: so then, you take up only some different degrees between them who differs so infinitely, so Incomprehensibly; the distance betwixt Heaven and Earth is but a poor similitude, to expresse the distance between God and Creatures; What is the distance betwixt a being and nothing? Can you measure it? Can you imagine it? Suppose you take the most high, and the most low, and measure the distance betwixt them, you do but consider the difference betwixt two beings, but you do not expresse how far nothing is distant from any of them: Now, if any thing could be imagined lesse then nothing, Could you at all guesse at the vast distance between it and a being; Now so is it here, thus saith the Lord, All Nations, their glory, perfection, and number, all of them, and all their excellencies united, do not amount to the value of an unity, in regard of my Majesty; all of them like Ciphers, joyn never so many of them together, they can never make up a Number, they are nothing in this regard, and lesse then nothing. So then, we ought thus to conceive of God, and thus to attribute a being and life to him, as in his sight, and in the consideration of it, all created beings

might vaniſh out of our ſight, as the glorious light of the Sun, though it do not annihilat the Stars, and make them nothing, yet it annihilats their appearance, to our ſenſes, and makes them diſappear, as if they were not, although there be a great difference and inequality of the Stars in the night, ſome lighter, ſome darker, ſome of the firſt magnitude, and ſome of the ſecond and third, *&c.* ſome of greater glory, and ſome of leſſe: But in the day time all are alike, all are darkened by the Suns glory; Even ſo it is here, though we may compare one creature with another, and find different degrees of perfection and excellency, while we are only comparing them among themſelves; but let once the glorious brightneſſe of God ſhine upon the ſoul, and in that light, all theſe lights ſhall be obſcured, all their differences unobſerved; an Angel and a Man, a Man and a Worm differ much in glory and perfection of being; But O in his preſence there is no ſuch reckoning, upon this account all things are alike, God infinitely diſtant from all, and ſo not more or leſſe, Infiniteneſſe is not capable of ſuch terms of compariſon. This is the reaſon why Chriſt ſayes, *there is none good, but one, even God.* Why? Becauſe in reſpect of his goodneſs, nothing deſerves that name, leſſer light in the view of the greater, is a darkneſſe, as leſſe good in compariſon of a greater, appears evill, how much more then ſhall created light and created goodneſſe loſe that name and notion in the preſence of that uncreated light, and ſelf-ſufficient goodneſſe; And therefore it is that the Lord calls himſelf after this manner, *I am* as if nothing elſe were, I will not ſay, ſaith he, that I am the higheſt, the beſt and moſt glorious that is; that ſuppoſeth other things to have ſome being, and ſome glory that is worthy the accounting of; *But I am, and there is none elſe, I am alone. I lift up my hand to Heaven, and ſwear, I live for ever.* There is nothing elſe can ſay, I am, I live, and there is none elſe; for there is nothing hath it of it ſelf: Can any boaſt of that which they have borrowed, and is not their own? As

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if the bird that had ſtollen from other birds its fair feathers, ſhould come forth and contend with them about beauty, would not they preſently every one pluck out their own? and leave her naked, to be an object of mockery to all, even ſo, ſince our breath and being is in our noſtrils, and that depends upon his Majeſties breathing upon us, if he ſhould but keep in his breath, as it were, we ſhould evaniſh into nothing, he looketh upon man and he is not, *Job* 7. 8. That is a ſtrange look, that looks man not only out of countenance, but out of life and being, he looks him into his firſt nothing, and then can he ſay, I live, I am; no, he muſt alwayes lay of himſelf in reſpect of God, as *Paul* of himſelf in reſpect of Chriſt, I live, yet not I, but Chriſt in me, I am, yet not I, but God in me: I live, I am, yet not *I*, but in God, in whom I live, and have my being. So that there is no other thing beſide God can ſay, I am; becauſe all things are but borrowed drops of this ſelf-ſufficient fountain, and ſparkls of this primitive light; Let any thing interveen between the ſtream and the fountain, and it is cut off and dried up; let any thing be interpoſed between the Sun and the Beam and it evaniſhes. Therefore this fountain being this originall light, this ſelf-being αὐτὸ ὄν as *Plato* called him, deſerves only the name of being, other things that we call after that name are nearer nothing then God, and ſo, in regard of his Majeſty may more fitly be called nothing then ſomething, you ſee then how profound a myſtery of Gods abſolute ſelf-ſufficient perfection is infolded in theſe three letters, I am, or in theſe four יהוה: If you ask what is God, there is nothing occures better then this, *I am, or he that is*, if I ſhould ſay he is the Almighty, the only wiſe, the moſt perfect, the moſt glorious, it is all contained in that word, *I am that I am, nempe hoc eſt ei eſſe, hæc omnia eſſe*; For that is to *be* indeed, to be all thoſe perfections ſimply, abſolutely, and as it were ſolely, if *I* ſay all that, and ſhould reckon out all the Scripture Epithets, *I* adde nothing, if I ſay no more, I diminiſh nothing.

As this holds out Gods absolute perfection, so we told you that it imports, his eternity and unchangeableneſſe, you know *Pilats* ſpeech, *what I have written I have written*, wherein he meant that he would not change it, it ſhould ſtand ſo. So this properly belongs to Gods eternity, *before the mountains were brought forth, from everlaſting to everlaſting he is God*, *Pſal.* 90. 2. Now this is properly to to *be*, and this only deſerves the name of being, which never was nothing, and never ſhall be nothing, which may alwayes ſay, *I am*; you know it is ſo with nothing elſe but God; the heavens and earth with the things therein could not ſay, 6000 years ago, *I am*. *Adam* could once have ſaid, I am, but now he cannot ſay it; for that ſelf-being and fountain-being hath ſaid to him, return to duſt; and ſo it is with all the generations paſt, where are they now? They were, but they are not; and we then were not, and now are, for we are come in their place, but within a little time, who of us can ſay, I am; No, we flee away and are like a dream, as when one awaketh: we are like a tale that is told, that makes a preſent noiſe, and it is paſt, within few years this generation will paſſe, and none will make mention of us, our place will not know us, no more then we do now remember theſe who have been before: Chriſt ſaid of *John*, *he was a burning and ſhining light*, he was, ſaith he, but now he is not, but Chriſt may alwayes ſay, *I am the light and life of men*. Man is, but look a little backward, and he was not; you ſhall find his original; and ſtep a little forward and he ſhall not be, you ſhall find his end, but God is *Alpha and Omega*, the beginning and the end, but oh, who can retire ſo far backward as to apprehend a beginning, or go ſuch a ſtart forward as conceive an end in ſuch a being as is the beginning, and end of all things, but without all beginning and end? Whoſe underſtanding would it not confound? There is no way here but to flee into *Pauls* Sanctuary, *O the height and breadth and depth*, we cannot imagine a being, but we muſt firſt conceive it nothing, and in ſome inſtant receiving its being; and, therefore *canſt thou by ſearching find out God?* There-

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ſore what his being is, hath not entered into the heart of man to conſider. If any man would live out the ſpace but of two generations, he would be a worlds wonder; But if any had their dayes prolonged as the Patriarches before the flood, they would be called ancient indeed, but then the heavens and earth are far more ancient; we may go backward the ſpace of neer 6000. years in our own mindes, and yet be as far from his beginning as we were, when we are come to the beginning of all things, a mans imagination may yet extend it ſelf further, and ſuppoſe to it ſelf as many thouſands of years before the beginning of time, as all the Angels and men of all nations, and generations from the beginning, if they had been imployed in no other thing but this, could have ſummed up; And then ſuppoſe a product to be made of all the ſeverall ſumms of years, it would be vaſt and unſpeakable, but yet your imagination could reach further, and multiply that great ſumme as often into it ſelf as there are unities into it: Now when you have done all this, you are never a whit nearer the dayes of the ancient of dayes. Suppoſe then this ſhould be the only exerciſe of men and Angels throughout all eternity, all this marvellous Arithmetick would not amount unto the leaſt ſhadow of the continuance of him who is from everlaſting; all that hudge product of all the multiplicationes of men and Angels, hath no proportion unto that never beginning, and never ending duration; The greateſt ſumme that is imaginable hath a certain proportion to the leaſt number, that it containeth it ſo oft and no oftner, ſo that the leaſt number being multiplied will amount unto the greateſt that you can conceive. But O, where ſhall a ſoul find it ſelf here? It is incloſed between infinitneſſe before, and infinitneſſe behind, between two everlaſtings, which way ſoever it turns, there is no out-going, which way ſoever it looks, it muſt loſe it ſelf in an infiniteneſſe round about it, it can find no beginning and no end, when it hath wearied it ſelf in ſearching, which if it finde not, it knowes not what it is, and

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cannot tell what it is. Now what are we then? O what are we who ſo magnifie our ſelves? *We are but of yeſterday, and know nothing*, Job 8. 9. Suppoſe that we had endured the ſpace of 1000. years, yet ſaith *Moſes*, Pſal. 90. 4. *A thouſand years are but as yeſterday in thy ſight*; Time hath no ſucceſſion to thee, thou beholdeſt at once what is not at once, but in ſeverall times, all that hath not the proportion of one day to thy dayes: we change in our dayes, and and are not that to day we were yeſterday, but *He is the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever*. Heb. 13. 8. Every day we are dying, ſome part of our life is taken away; we leave ſtill one day more behind us, and what is behind us is gone and cannot be recovered: though we vainly pleaſe our ſelves in the number of our years, and the extent of our life, and the viciſſitudes of time, yet the truth is, we are but ſtill loſing ſo much of our being and time as paſſeth, firſt we loſt our child-hood, then we loſe our manhood, and then we leave our old age behind us alſo, and there is no more before us, even the very preſent day we divide it with death, but when he moves all things, he remains immoveable, though dayes and years be in a continuall flux and motion about him, and they carry us down with their force, yet *He abides the ſame for ever*, even the earth that is eſtabliſhed ſo ſure, and the Heavens that are ſuppoſed to be incorruptible, yet *they wax old as doth a garment*, but *He is the ſame, and his years have no end*, Pſal. 102. 26, 27. *Sine principio principium, abſque fine finis, cui præteritum non abit, haud adit futurum, ante omnia, poſt omnia, totus, unus ipſe*, Hs is the beginning without any beginning, the end without an end, there is nothing by-paſt to him, and nothing to come, *ſed uno mentis cernit in ictu, quæ ſunt, quæ fuerunt, quæ futuraque*, He is one that is all, before all, after all, and in all: He beholds out of the exalted and ſupereminent tower of eternity, all the ſucceſſions and changes of the creatures, and there is no ſucceſſion, no mutation in his knowledge, as in ours, *Known to him are all his works, from the beginning*. He can declare the end before

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the beginning, for he knowes the end of all things, before he give them beginning: Therefore he is never driven to any conſultation upon any emergent or incident, as the wiſeſt of men are, who could not foreſee all accidents and events, but *He is in one mind*, ſaith *Job*, and that one mind and one purpoſe is one for all, one concerning all, He had it from everlaſting and who can turn him? for *He will accompliſh what his ſoul deſires.*

Now, canſt thou by ſearching find out God? Canſt thou a poor mortall creature, either aſcend up unto the height of Heaven, or deſcend down into the depths of Hell? Canſt thou travell abroad, and compaſſe all the ſea and dry land, by its longitude and latitude? Would any mortall creature undertake ſuch a voyage, to compaſſe the Univerſe? Nay, not only ſo, but to ſearch into every corner of it, above and below, on the right hand, and on the left; No certainly, unleſſe we ſuppoſe a man whoſe head reaches unto the height of Heaven, and whoſe feet is down in the depths of hell, and whoſe arms ſtretched out, can fathom the length of the earth, and breadth of the Sea, unleſſe, I ſay, we ſuppoſe ſuch a creature, then it is in vain to imagine, that either the height of the one, or the depth of the other, the length of the one, and the breadth of the other can be found out and meaſured: Now if mortall creatures cannot attain the meaſure of that which is finite, O then, what can a creature do, what can a creature know of him that is infinite, and the Maker of all theſe things, you cannot compaſſe the Sea and Land, how then can a ſoul comprehend him, *who hath meaſured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and comprehended the duſt of the earth in a meaſure, and the mountains he weighs in ſcales, and the hills in a ballance*, Iſai. 40. 12. Thou cannot meaſure the circumference of the Heaven, how then canſt thou find out him, *who metted out the heavens with his ſpan, and ſtretcheth them out as a curtain?* Iſai. 40. 12. 22. You cannot number the Nations, or perceive the magnitude of the Earth, and the huge extent of the Heavens, What then

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canst thou know of him, *who sitteth on the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants are but as grasse-hoppers before him*, and he spreadeth out the Heavens as a tent to dwell into? He made all the pins and stakes of this Tabernacle, and he fastend them below, but upon nothing, and stretches this Curtain about them, and above them; and it was not so much difficulty to him, as to you to draw the Curtain about your Bed, for *he spake, and it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast*. Canst thou by searching find him out? And yet thou must search him, not so much out of curiosity to know what he is, for *he dwells in inaccessible light, which no man hath seen, and no man can see*, 1 Tim. 6. 16. Not so much to find him, as to be found of him, or to find what we cannot know when we have found; *Hic est qui nunquam quari frustra potest, cum tamen invenire nequeat*, you may seek him, but though you never find him, yet ye shall not seek him in vain, for ye shall find blessednesse in him: Though you find him, yet, can you search him out unto perfection? Then what you have found were not God? How is it possible for such narrow hearts to frame an apprehension, or receive an impression of such an immense greatnesse, and eternall goodnesse? Will not a soul losse its power of thinking, and speaking, because there is so much to be thought and spoken; and it so transcends all that it can think or speak? Silence then must be the best Rhetorick, and the sweetest eloquence, when eloquence it self must become dumb and silent, it is the abundance and excesse of that inaccessible light, that hath no proportion to our understandings, that strikes us as blind as in the darknesse the want of light: All that we can say of God is, that whatsoever we can think or conceive, he is not that, because he hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive, and that he is not like any of these things which we know, unto which if he be not like, we cannot frame any similitude or likenesse of him in our knowledge: What shall we then do? Seek him, and search him indeed, but if we cannot know him, to reve-

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rence and fear and adore what we know: ſo much of him may be known, as may teach us our duty, and ſhew unto us our bleſſednesſe; let then all our inquiries of him have a ſpeciall relation to this end, that we may out of love and fear of ſuch a glorious and good God, worſhip and ſerve him, and compoſe our ſelves according to his will, and wholly to his pleaſure: What ever thou knows of God, or ſearches of him, it is but a vain ſpeculation. and a work of curioſity, if it do not lead to this end, to frame and faſhion thy ſoul to an union and communion with him in love; If it do not diſcover thy ſelf unto thy ſelf, that in that light of Gods glorious Majeſty thou may diſtinctly behold thy own vileneſſe, and wretched miſery, thy darkneſſe, and deadneſſe, and utter impotency. The Angels that *Iſaiah* ſaw attending God in the Temple, had wings covering their faces, & wings covering their feet, theſe excellent ſpirits who muſt cover their from us, becauſe we cannot behold their glory, as *Moſes* behoved to be vailed, yet they cannot behold his glory, but muſt cover their face from the radient & ſhining brightneſſe of his Majeſty, yet they have other two wings to flee with; and being thus compoſed in reverence and fear to God, they are ready to execute his commands willingly and ſwiftly, *Iſai.* 6. 1, 2, 3, &c. But what is the uſe *Iſaiah* makes of all this glorious ſight? *Woe is me, I am a man of polluted lips*, &c. *Ob, all is unclean, People, and Paſtor*: He had known, doubtleſs, ſomething of it before, but now he ſees it of new, as if he had never ſeen it, the glory of God ſhining on him, doth not puffe him up in arrogancy and conceit of the knowledge of ſuch profound myſteries, but he is more abaſed in himſelf by it, it ſhines into his heart, and whole man, and lets him ſee all unclean, within and without; and ſo it was with *Job*, *Job* 42. 5, 6. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear*, but as long as it was hear-ſay, I thought my ſelf ſomething; I often reflected upon my ſelf and actions, with a kind of ſelf complacency and delight: But now, ſaith he, ſince *I have ſeen thee by the ſeeing of the eye, I abhor my ſelf in duſt and aſhes*, I cannot look upon my ſelf with patience, without abhor-

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rency and deteſtation; ſelf-love made me loath other mens ſins more then mine own, and ſelf-love did cover mine own ſins from me, it preſented me to my ſelf in a feigned likeneſs, but now I ſee my ſelf in my true ſhape, and all coverings ſtriped off, thy light hath pierced in to my ſoul, and behold, I cannot endure to look upon my ſelf: Here now is the true knowledge of Gods Majeſty, which diſcovers within thee a myſtery of Iniquity; and here is the knowledge of God indeed, which abaſes all things beſide God, not only in opinion, but in affection, that attracts and unites thy ſoul to God, and draws it from thy ſelf and all created things, this is a right diſcovery of divine purity and glory, that ſpots even the cleanneſs of Angels, and ſtains the pride of all glory, much more will it repreſent filthineſs as filthineſs, without a covering. Its knowledge and ſcience (falſly ſo called) that puffeth up, for true knowledge emptieth a ſoul of it ſelf, and humbleth a ſoul in it ſelf, that it may be full of God. He that thinks he knows any thing, he knows nothing as he ought to know.

This then is the firſt property or marke of ſaving knowledge of God, it removes all grounds of vain confidence, that a ſoul cannot truſt unto it ſelf; and then the very proper intent of it is, that a ſoul may truſt in God, and depend on him in all things: for this purpoſe the Lord hath called himſelf by ſo many names in Scripture, anſwerable to our ſeverall neceſſities, and difficulties, that he might make known to us, how all-ſufficient he is, that ſo we may turn our eyes and hearts towards him: This was the intent of this name *I am*, that Moſes might have a ſupport of his Faith, for if he had looked to outward appearance, was it not almoſt a ridiculous thing, and like a vain fancy, for a poor inconſiderable man to go to a King with ſuch a meſſage, that he would diſmiſſe ſo many ſubjects, and was it not an attempt of ſome mad man to go about to lead ſo many thouſands from a wicked tyrannicall King, into another nation. Well ſaith the Lord,

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I am, I who give all things a being, will give a being to my promiſe, I will make *Pharaoh* hearken and the people obey. Well then what is it that this name of God will not anſwer? It is a creating name, a name that can bring all things out of nothing by a word, if he be ſuch as he is, then he can make of us what he pleaſes. If our ſouls had this name conſtantly engraven on our hearts, O what power would divine promiſes and threatnings have with us? *I, even I, am he that comforteth thee*, ſaith he, If we beleeved that it were he indeed, the Lord Jehovah, how would we be comforted? How would we praiſe him by his name *JAH*? How would we ſtoup unto him, and ſubmit unto his bleſſed will, if we beleeved this, would we not be as dependent on him as if we had no being in our our ſelves? Would we not make him our habitation and dwelling place, and conclude our own ſtability, and the ſtability of his Church from his unvariable eternity, as the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 90. 1. and *Pſal.* 102. at the end: how can we think of ſuch a fountain-being but we muſt withall acknowledge our ſelves to be ſhadows of his goodneſſe, and that we owe to him what we are, and ſo conſecrate and dedicate our ſelves to his glory? How can we conſider ſuch a ſelf-being, independent and creating goodneſſe, but we muſt have ſome deſire to cleave to him, and ſome confidence to truſt in him? Now this is to know him. When we think on his unchangeableneſſe, let us conſider our own vanity whoſe glory and perfection is like a ſummer flower, or like a vapour aſcending for a very little time, whoſe beſt eſtate is altogether vanity: our purpoſes are ſoon broken off, and made of none effect, our reſolutions change, this is a Character of Mortality, we are not alwayes alike. *non ſibi conſtare nec ubique & ſemper ſibi parem eundemque eſſe.* To to be now one thing, and then another thing, is a propoperty of ſinfull and wretched man; Therefore let us *ceaſe from man whoſe breath is in his noſtrils*, and not truſt in Princes who ſhall die, far leſſe in our ſelves who are leſſe then the leaſt of men. But let us put our truſt in God,

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who changes not, and we ſhall not be conſumed; our wi
ters ſhall not fail, we ſhall never be aſhamed of any hope
we have in him. There is nothing elſe you truſt in, but un-
doubtedly it ſhal prover you ſhame & confuſion: In ſumm,
what ever you hear or know of God, know that it is vain
and empty, unleſſe it deſcend down into the heart to faſhion
it to his fear and love, and extend unto the outward man
to conform it to obedience, *you are but vain in your ima-
ginations, and your fooliſh hearts are darkened,* while when
you know God, you glorify him not as God, if that be not
the fruit and end of knowledge, that knowledge ſhall be
worſe to thee then ignorance, for both it brings on judiciall
hardening here, and will be thy ſolemn accuſer and witneſſe
againſt thee hereafter, *Rom.* 1. 21. 24. The knowledge
of Jeſus Chriſt, truely ſo called, is neither barren nor un-
fruitfull, for out of its root and ſape ſprings out humility
ſelf-abaſing, confidence in God, patience in tribulations,
meekneſſe in provocations, temperance and ſobriety in
lawfull things, &c. 2 *Pet.* 1. 5, 6, 7, 8.

Exod. 34. 5, 6, 7, 8. *The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious*, &c.

THere is nothing can ſeparate between God and a people, but iniquity, and yet he is very loath to ſeparate, even for that, he makes many ſhowes of departing, that ſome may hold him faſt, and indeed he is not difficult to be holden. He threatens often to remove his preſence from a Perſon, or Nation, and he threatens that he may not indeed remove, but that they may intreat him to ſtay, and he is not hard to be intreated: who is a God like unto him, ſlow to anger and of great mercy? He is long of being provoked, and not long provoked, for it is like the anger of a Parents love: Love takes on anger, as the laſt remedy, and if it prevail, it is as glad to put it off, as it was unwilling to take it on. You may ſee a lively picture of this in Gods dealing with *Moſes* and this people, in the preceeding Chapter. He had long endured this rebellious and obſtinate people, had often threatened to cut them off, and yet, as it were, loath to do it, and repenting of it, he ſuffers himſelf to be entreated for them, but all in vain to them, they corrupted their way ſtill more: And in the 32. Chap. falls in groſſe idolatry, the great treſpaſſe that he had given them ſo ſolemn warning of often, whereupon great wrath is conceived. And the Lord, Chap. 33. 1. threatens to depart from them, go your way, ſaith he, to Canaan, but I will not go with you; take your venture of any judgements, and the People of the Lands cruelty: here is a ſad farewell to Iſrael, and who would think he could be detained after all that? Who would think that he could be entreated? And yet he is not entreat-

ed, he is not requested before he give some ground of it, and before he first condescends, go, saith he, and *put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.* Will he then accept a repenting people, and is their yet hope of mercy? Should he that is going away, shew us the way to keep him still? And he that flees from us, will he strengthen us to persue and follow after him? This is not after the manner of men, it is true, whose compassions fails, when their passion ariseth, but this is the manner and method of grace; or of him who waits to be gracious, he flees so as he would have a follower, yea, while he seems to go away, he draws the soul, that it may run after him: hence is that word, *Psal.* 63. 8. *My soul followes hard after thee; thy right hand upholds mee.* Well, the people mourns and puts off their ornaments in signe of humiliation and abasement, but all this doth not pacifie and quench the flame that was kindled: *Moses* takes the Tabernacle out of the Camp, the place of judgement where God spake with the people, and the cloud, the sign of Gods presence removes: in a word, the signs of Gods loving and kind presence departs from them, to signifie that they were divorced from God, and in a manner, the Lord by *Moses*, excommunicates all the people, and rulers both, and drawes away these holy things from the contagion of a prophane people: But yet all is not gone, he goes far off, but not out of sight, that you may alwayes follow him, and if you follow, he will stand still; he is never without the reach of crying, though we do not perceive him. Now in this sad case you may have a triall who is godly: every one that seeks the Lord will separate from the unholy congregation, and follow the Tabernacle; And this affects the whole people much, that they all worship in the tent door. Now in the mean time God admits *Moses* to speak with him; though he will not speak to the people, yet he will speak with their

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Mediator, a typicall Mediator; to shew us that God is well-pleased in Christ, and so all Christs intercessions and requests for us will get a hearing, when they are come once in talking, the businesse is taken up, for he is not soon angry, and never implacably angry, slow to anger, and keeps it not long: *Moses* falling familiar with God, not only obtains his request for the people, but becomes more bold in a request for his own satisfaction and confirmation: he could not endure to lead that people, except God went with him, and having the promise of his going with them, he cannot endure distance with him, but aspires to the nearest Communion that may be: Oh, that it were so with us. His great request is, that the Lord would show him his glory, had he not seen much of this already? And more then any man ever saw, when he spake in the mount with God, *&c.* Nay, but he would see more, for there is alwayes more to be seen, and there is in a godly soul alwayes more desire to see it, the more is seen, the more is loved and desired, tasting of it only begets a kindly appetite after it, and the more tasted, still the fresher and more recent; But yet it is above both desire and fruition, thou cannot see my face, *&c.* All our knowledge of God, all our attainments of experience of him, do reach but to some dark and confused apprehension of what he is, the clearest and nearest sight of God in the world, is, as if a man were not known but by his back, which is a great point of estrangement: its said, in Heaven we shall see him face to face, and fully as he is, because then the soul is made capable of it.

Two things in us here puts us in an incapacity of nearness with God, infirmity and iniquity, infirmity, in us cannot behold his glory, its of so weak eyes, that the brightnesse of the Sun would strike it blind, and iniquity in us, he cannot behold it, because he is of pure eyes, that can look on no unclean thing: its the only thing in the

Creation that Gods holineſſe hath antipathy at, and therefore he is ſtill about the deſtroying of the body of ſin in us, about the purging from all filthineſſe of fleſh and ſpirit, and till the ſoul be thus purged of all ſin, by the operation of the Holy Ghoſt, it cannot be a Temple for an immediat viſion of him, and an immediat exhibition of God to us: Sin is the wall of partion, and the thick cloud that eclipſes his glory from us, its the oppoſite Hemiſphere of darkneſſe, contrare to light, according to the acceſſe or receſſe of Gods preſence, it is more or leſſe dark, the more ſin reign in thee, the leſſe of God is in thee, and the more ſin be ſubdued, the readier and neerer is Gods preſence: but let us comfort our ſelves, that one day ſhall put off both infirmity and iniquity, mortality ſhall put on immortality, and corruption be cloathed with incorruption; we ſhall leave the rags of mortall weakneſſe in the grave, and our menſtrous cloaths of ſin behind us, and then ſhall the weak eyes of fleſh be made like Eagles-eyes, to behold the Sun, and then ſhall the ſoul be cloathed with holineſſe, as with a Garment, which God ſhall delight to look upon, becauſe he ſees his own image in that glaſſe.

We come to the Lords ſatisfying of *Moſes* deſire, and proclaiming his Name before him; it is himſelf only can tell you what he is, it is not Miniſters Preaching, or others diſcourſe, can proclaime that Name to you, we may indeed ſpeak over thoſe words unto you, but it is the Lord that muſt write that Name upon your heart, he only can diſcover his glory to your ſpirit: there is a ſpirit of life which cannot be encloſed in Letters and Syllables, or tranſmitted through your ears into your hearts, but he himſelf muſt create it inwardly, and ſtirr up the inward ſenſe and feeling of that Name, of theſe Attributes, Faith indeed comes by hearing, and our knowledge in this life is thorow a glaſſe, darkly

ly, thorrow ordinances and ſenſes, but there muſt be an inward teaching and ſpeaking to your ſouls, to make that effectuall, *the anointing teacheth you all things*, 1 *Joh.* 2. 27. Alas, its the ſeparation of that from the word that makes it ſo unprofitable, if the ſpirit of God were inwardly writing what the word is teaching, then ſhould your ſouls be living Epiſtles, that ye might read Gods Name on them: O be much in imploying of, and depending on him that teacheth to profite, who only can declare unto your ſouls what he is.

Theſe names expreſſeth his eſſence or being, and his properties, what he is in himſelf, and what he is to us, in himſelf, he is *Jehovah*, or, *a ſelf being*, αὐτο ὀν, as we heard in the 3. Chap. *I am that I am*, and EL. a ſtrong God, or almighty God, which two hold out to us the abſolute incomprehenſible perfection of God, eminently and infinitely encloſing within himſelf all the perfections of the creatures, the unchangeable and immutable being of God, who was, and is, and is to come, without ſucceſſion, without variation, or ſhadow of turning, and then the Almighty power of God, by which, without difficulty, by the inclination and beck of his will and pleaſure, he can make or unmake all, create, or annihilate, to whom nothing is impoſſible; which three, if they were pondered by us, till our ſouls received the ſtamp of them, they would certainly be powerfull to abſtract, and draw our hearts from the vain, changeable, and empty ſhadow of the creature, and gather our ſcattered affections that are parted among them, becauſe of their inſufficiency, that all might unite in one, and joyn with this ſelf-ſufficient and eternall God; I ſay, if a ſoul did indeed beleeve and conſider, how all-ſufficient he is, how inſufficient all things elſe are, would it not cleave to him, and draw near to him, *Pſal.* 73. at the end. It is the very torment and vexation of the ſoul to be thus racked, diſtracted, and divided about many

things; and therefore many, becauſe there is none of them can ſupply all our wants, our wants are infinite, our deſires inſatiable, and the good that is in any thing is limited and bounded, it can ſerve but for one uſe, and another for another uſe, and when all are together, they can but ſupply ſome wants, but they leave much of the ſoul empty: But often theſe outward things croſſes one another and cannot conſiſt together, and hence ariſeth much ſtrife and debate in a ſoul, his need requires both, and both will not agree: But O that you could ſee this one univerſall good, one for all, and above all, your ſouls would chooſe him certainly, your ſouls would truſt in him, ye would ſay, *Aſſur ſhall not ſave us, we will not ride on horſes*: creatures ſhall not ſatisfie us, we will ſeek our happineſſe in thee, and no where elſe, ſince we have taſted this new wine, away with the old, the new is better. I beſeech you, make God your friend, for he is a great one, whether he be a friend or an enemy, he hath two properties that make him either moſt comfortable, or moſt terrible, according as he is at peace or warre with ſouls, *Eternity*, and *Omnipotency*. You are all once enemies to him. O conſider what a party you have, an Almighty Party, and an unchangeable Party, and if you will make peace with him, and that in Chriſt, then know he is the beſt friend in the world, becauſe he is unchangeable, and Almighty, if he be thy friend, he will do all for thee he can do, and thou haſt need of: But many friends, willing to do, yet have not ability, but he hath power to do what he will and pleaſes; many friends are changeable, their affections dries up, or themſelves die, and therefore even Princes friendſhip is but a vain confidence, for they ſhal die, and then their thoughts of favour periſh with them, but he abides the ſame for all generations, their is no end of his duration, and no end of his affection; he can ſtill ſay, *I am that I am*, what I was, I am, and I will be, what

I am, men cannot ſay ſo, they are like the Brookes that the companies of *Teman* looked after, and thought to have found them in ſummer, as they left them in winter; but behold they were dried up, and the companies aſhamed. God cannot make thee aſhamed of thy hope, becauſe he is faithfull and able, abilitie and fidelity is a ſure Anchor to hold by, in all ſtorms and tempeſts.

Such is God in himſelf, now there are two manner of wayes he vents himſelf towards the creatures, in a comfortable way, or in a terrible way. This glorious perfection and almighty power hath an iſſue upon ſinners, and it runs in a two-fold channell, of mercy or juſtice; of mercy towards miſerable ſinners that finds themſelves loſt, and flee unto him, and take hold of his ſtrength, and juſtice towards all thoſe that flatter themſelves in their own eyes, and continue in their ſins, and put the evill day far off: There is no mercy for ſuch as fear not juſtice, and there is no juſtice for ſuch as flee from it in to mercy. The Lord exhibits himſelf in a two-fold appearance, according to the condition of ſinners; He ſits on a Throne and Tribunall of grace and mercy, to make acceſſe to the vileſt ſinner, who is affriad of his wrath, and would fain be at peace with him, and he ſits on a Throne of juſtice and wrath, to ſeclude and debarre preſumptuous ſinners from his Holineſſe. There were two mountains under the Law, one of curſings, another of bleſſings, theſe are the mountains God ſets his Throne upon, and from theſe he ſpeaks, and ſentences mankind: from the mountain of curſings, he hath pronounced a curſe, and condemnatory ſentence upon all fleſh, *for all have ſinned*, therefore he concludes all under ſin, that all fleſh might ſtop their mouth, and the whole world become guilty before God. Now the Lord having thus condemned all Mankinde becauſe of diſobedience, Hee ſits again upon the mountain of Bleſſings, and pronounces a

sentence of absolution, of as many as have taken with the sentence of condemnation, and appealled to his grace and mercy, and these which do not so, the sentence of condemnation stands above their head unrepealled. He erects his Tribunall of justice in the Word for this end, that all flesh might once be convicted before him, and therefore He cites as it were, and summonds all men to sist themselves and compear before his Tribunall, to be judged; he layes out an accusation in the word against them, he takes their consciences witnesse of the truth of all that is charged on them, and then pronounces that sentence in their conscience, *Cursed is he that abides not in all things*, which the conscience subsumes, and concludes it self accursed, and subscribes to the equitie of the sentence, and thus the man is guilty before God, and his mouth stopped, he hath no excuses, no pretences, he can see no way to escape from justice, and God is justified by this means, in his speaking and judging *Psal.* 51. 4. The soul ratifies and confirmes the truth and justice of all his threatenings, and judgements, *Rom.* 3. 4. Now for such souls as joyn with God in judging and condemning themselves, the Lord hath erected a Throne of grace, and Tribunall of mercy in the word, whereupon he hath set his Son Jesus Christ, *Psal* 2. 6. and 89. 14. and 45. 6. *Heb.* 1. 8. And O this Throne is a comfortable Throne, mercy and truth goes before the face of the King, to welcome and intertain miserable sinners, and to make accesse to them. And from this Throne Jesus Christ holds out the Scepter of the Gospell, to invite sinnners, self-condemned sinners, to come to him alone who hath gotten all finall judgement committed to him, that *he may give eternall life to whom he will*, *Joh.* 5. 21. 22. O that is a sweet and ample commission given to our friend and brother Jesus Christ, power to repeall sentences past against us, power to loose them whom justice hath bound, power and

and authority to absolve them, whom justice hath condemned, and to blesse them whom the Law hath cursed, and to open their mouth to praise, whose mouth sin and guiltinesse hath stopped: power to give the answer of a good conscience, to thy evil self-tormenting conscience, in a word, he hath power to give life, to make alive and heal these who are killed, or wounded by the commandment. Now I say, seeing God hath of purpose established this Throne of mercy in the word, thou mayest well after receiving and acknowledging of the justice of the curse of the Law, appeal to divine mercy and grace, sitting on another Throne of the Gospel, thou may, if thy conscience urge thee to despair, and to conclude there is no hope, thou may, I say, appeal from thy conscience, from Satan, from justice, unto Jesus Christ, who is holding out the Scepter to thee; the Minister calls thee, rise and come, stand no longer before that Bar, for it is a subordinate Judicatory, there is a way to redresse thee by a higher court of grace, thou may say to justice, to Satan, to thy own conscience, it is true, *I* confesse that I deserve that sentence, I am guilty and can say nothing against it, while I stand alone, but though I cannot satisfy, and have not, yet their is one Jesus Christ, who gave his life a ransome for many, and whom God hath given as a propitiation for sins, he hath satisfied and payed the debt in my name, go and apprehend the Cationer, since he hath undertaken it, nay, he hath done it and is absolved. Thou had him in thy hands, O justice, thou had him prisoner under the power of death, since you have let him go, then he is acquitted from all the charge of my sins, and therefore since I know that he is now a King, and hath a Throne to judge the world, and plead the cause of his poor sheep, I will appeal to him, referre the cause to his decision, I will make my supplication to him, and certainly he will hear, and interpose himself between wrath and me, he will rescinde this sentence of condemnation, since he himself was condemned for us, and is justified, *it is Christ that died, nay, rather is risen again, who*

shall condemn me? He is near that justifies me, Rom. 8. 33. 34. Now if thou do indeed flee into him for refuge, that cicle is open for thee, and nothing to prejudge thy entrie: but no curse, no condemnation can enter in it, *Rom. 8. 1.* He will justify and absolve thee from all things whereof the Law could not justify thee, but condemn thee, *there is forgivenesse with him, that he may be feared.* David may teach thee this manner of appellation, *Psal. 130. and 142.* of appealling from the deserved curse to free undeserved blessing and mercy in Christ.

Let us consider this Name of the Lord, and it shal answer all our suspicions of him, all our objections against coming to him, and beleeving in him, it is certain, ignorance is the mother of unbeleefe, together with the naturall perversnesse of our hearts, if we knew his name we would trust in him, if his Names were pondered and considered, we would believe in him. Satan knows this, and therefore his great slight and cunning is, to hold our minds fixed on the consideration of our misery, and desparate estate, he keeps the awakened conscience still upon that comfortlesse sight, and he labours to represent God by halfes, and that is a false representation of God, he represents him as cloathed with justice and vengeance, as a consuming fire, in which light a soul can see nothing but desperation written; and he labours to hold out the thoughts of his mercy and grace, or diverts a soul from the consideration of his promises, whence it comes, that they are not established, that though salvation be near, yet it is farre from them in their sense and apprehension, therefore I say, you would labour to get an intire sight of God, and you shall see him best in his word, there he reveals himself, and there you find, If ye consider that which may make you fear him indeed, but never flee from him, that which may abase you, but withall imbolden you to come to him, though trembling what ever though possesse thee of thine own misery, of thy own guiltinesse, labour to counterpoise that with a thought of his mercy and free

promises

promiſes, whatever be ſuggeſted of his holineſſe and juſtice, hear himſelf ſpeak out his own Name, and thou ſhall hear as much of mercy and grace, as may make theſe not terrible unto thee, though high and honourable. The Lord hath ſo framed the expreſſion and proclamation of his Name in this place, that firſt a word of Majeſty and power is promiſed, (*The Lord The Lord God*) that it may compoſe our hearts in fear and reverence of ſuch a glorious one, and make a preparatory impreſion of the Majeſty of our God, which indeed is the foundation of a true faith, it begins to adore and admire a Deity, a Majeſty hid from the world, the thoughts of his power and glory poſſeſſes the ſoul firſt, and maks it begin to tremble to think that it hath ſuch a high and holy one to deal with.

But in the next place you have the moſt ſweet, alluring, comforting ſtiles that can be imagined to meet with the trembling and languiſhing condition of a ſoul that would be ready to faint before ſuch a Majeſty, here mercy taks it by the hand, and gives a cordiall of *grace*, *pardon*, *forgiveneſſe*, &c. to it, which revives the ſoul of the humble, and intermingles ſome rejoicing with the former trembling. Majeſtie and greatneſſe goes before to abaſe, and humble the ſoul in its own eyes, and mercy and goodneſſe ſecludes them, to lift up theſe who are low, and exalt the humble, and in the deſcription of this, the Lord ſpends moe words, according to the neceſſity of a ſoul, to ſignifie to us how great and ſtrong conſolation may be grounded on his Name, how acceſſible he is, though he dwell in inacceſſible light, how lovely he is though he be the high and the lofty one, how good he is, though he be great, how merciſull he is, though he be majeſtick; In a word, that theſe that flee to him may have all invitation, all encouragement to come, and nothing to diſcourage, to perjudge their welcome, that who ever will, may come, and nothing may hinder on his part. And then after all this, he ſubjoines a word of his juſtice, in avenging ſin, to ſhew us that he leaves that

as the laſt, that he aſſayes all gaining wayes of mercy with us, and that he is not very much delighted with the death of ſinners, that ſo whoever periſhes may blame themſelves, for hating their own ſalvation, and forſaking their own mercy.

Now whoever thou art that apprehends a dreadfull and terrible God, and thy ſelf a miſerable and wretched ſinner, thou canſt find no comfort in Gods highneſſe and power, but it looks terrible upon thee, becauſe thou doubts of his goodwill to ſave and pardon thee: Thou ſayeſt with the blind man, if thou wilt thou can do it; thou art a ſtrong God, but what comfort can I have in thy ſtrength, ſince I know not thy good-will? I ſay, the Lord anſwers thee in this name, I am *merciſull*, ſaith the Lord, if thou be miſerable; I am merciſull as well as ſtrong, if thou have ſin and miſery, I have compaſſion and pitie, my mercy may be a coppie and patern to all men to learn it of me, even towards their own brethren, *Luk.* 6. 36. Therefore he is called *the Father of mercies*, 2. *Cor.* 1. 3. *Miſericors eſt cui alterius miſeria cordi eſt.* mercy hath its very name from miſery, for it is no other thing then to lay anothers miſery to heart, not to deſpiſe it, not to adde to it, but to help it, its a ſtrong inclination to ſuccour the miſery of ſinners, therefore thou needs no other thing to commend thee to him. Art thou miſerable, and knows it indeed? Then he is merciſull, and know that alſo, theſe two ſute well.

Nay, but ſaith the convinced ſoul, I know not if he will be merciſull to me, for what am I? There is nothing in me to be regarded, I have nothing to conciliat favour, and all that may procure hatred, but, ſaith the Lord, *I am gracious*, and diſpenſes mercy freely, without reſpect to condition or qualification, ſay not, if I had ſuch a meaſure of humiliation as ſuch a one, if I loved him ſo much, if I had ſo much godly ſorrow and repentance, then, I think he would be merciſull to me. Say not ſo, for behold he is gracious, he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy,

mercy, and there is no other cause, no motive to procure it, it comes from within his own breast. It is not thy repentance will make him love thee, nor thy hardnesse of heart will make him hate thee, or obstruct the vent of his grace towards thee: no, if it be grace, it is no more of works, no works in that way that thou imagines, it is not of repentance, nor of faith, in that sense thou conceiveſt, but it is freely, without the hire, without the price of repentance, or faith, because all those are but the free gifts of grace, thou would have these graces to procure his favour, and to make them the ground of thy beleeving in his promises, but grace is without money, it immediatly contracts with discovered misery, so that if thou do discover in thy self misery and sin, though thou find nothing else, yet do not cast away confidence, but so much the more addresse thy self to mercy and grace which doth not seek repentance in thee, but brings repentance and faith with them unto thee, yet their is some hink in the awakened conscience; I have gone on long in sin, I have been a presumptuous sinner, can he endure me longer? Well, hear what the Lord saith, *I am long-suffering*, and patient, and if he had not been so, we had been damned ere now, patience hath a long terme and we cannot out-run it, out-weary it. Why do we not wonder that he presently and instantly executed his wrath on Angels, and gave them not one houres space for repentance, but cast them down headlong into destruction, as in a moment; and yet his Majestie hath so long delayed the execution of our sentence, and calls us to repentance and forgivenesse, that we may escape the condemnation of Angels: his patience is not slackneſse and negligence as men counts it. 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. He sits not in Heaven as an idol and idle spectator of what men are doing; but he observes all wrongs and is sensible of them also; and if we were mindefull and sensible of them also, he would forget them, he is *long-suffering*: this is extended and streatched out patience beyond all expectation, beyond all deserving, yea, contrary to it. Therefore as long as

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he forbears, if thou apprehend thy miſery and ſin, and continuance in it, do not conclude that it is deſperate, *why ſhould a living man complain.* As long as patience lengthens thy life, if thou deſire to come to him, beleeve he will accept thee.

But ſaith the doubting ſoul, I am exceeding perverſe and wicked, there is nothing in me but wickedneſſe, it ſo abounds in me that there is nothing in me but wickedneſs, it ſo abounds in me that there is none like me, but ſaith the Lord, *I am aboundant in goodneſſe.* Thy wickedneſs though it be great it is but a created wickedneſs, but my goodneſſe is the goodneſſe of God; I am as aboundant in grace and goodneſſe as thou art in ſin, nay, infinitly more, thy ſin is but the tranſgreſſion of a finite creature, but my mercy is the compaſſion of an infinite God, it can ſwallow it up, ſuppoſe thy ſin cry up to Heaven, yet mercy reaches above Heaven and is built up for ever. Here is an invitation to all ſinners to come and taſte, O come and taſte and ſee how good the Lord is, goodneſſe is communicative, it diffuſes it ſelf, like the Suns light. There is riches of his goodneſs, *Rom.* 2. 4. Poor ſoul thou cannot ſpend it though thou have many wants.

But I am full of doubtings, feares and jealouſies, I cannot beleeve in his promiſes, I often queſtion them, how how then will he perform them? I ſay, (ſaith the Lord) *I am aboundant in truth*, he will certainly perform, *ſhall our unbeleefe* or doubting, *make the faith of God of none effect*, &c. *Rom* 3. 3. *God forbid*, his faithfulneſs reaches unto the clouds, he will keep Covenant with thee, whoſe ſoul hath choſen him, though thou often queſtion and doubt of him. Indeed thou would not give indulgence to thy doubtings and jealouſies, but look on them as high provocations, for what can be more grievous to fervent love, then to meet with jealouſie, jealouſie would quench any creatures love, but though it grieve and provoke him, yet he will not change, he will not diminiſh his, only do not think your diſputings, and quarrellings innocent and harmleſſe things;

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so certainly, they grieve the spirit, stirres up the beloved to go away, as it were, before he please, and makes thee walk without comfort, and without fruit; yet he will bear with and quench the smoaking flax of beleevers desires, though they do not arise to the flame of assurance.

But the wounded spirit hath one or two burdens more: I have abused much mercy how can he pitie me? I have turned grace into wantonnesse, what when I look to mercy and grace to comfort me, they do rather challenge me, the sins of none are like mine, none of such a hainous presumptuous nature, But let us hear what God the Lord speaks, *I keep mercy for thousands, and forgive iniquity, transgression and sin*, thou hast wasted much mercy, but more is behind, all the treasure is not spent, though there were many thousand worlds beside, I could pardon them all, if they would flee into my mercy, thou shalt not be straitened in me, mercy will pardon, thy abuse of mercy will forgive all faults thou doest against it self. Thou that sins against the son of man, the Redeemer of the world, and remedy of sin, yet there is pardon for thee, whatever the quality, condition, or circumstance of thy sin be; whosoever convinced of it, and loadned with it, desires rest to thy soul, thou may finde it in Christ whose former kindnesse thou hast answered with contempt, many sins, many great sins, and these presumptuous sins cannot exclude, nay, no sin can exclude a willing soul. Unbelief keeps thee unwilling, and so excludes thee.

Now as the spider sucks poison out of the sweetest flower, so the most part of souls suck nothing but delusion and presumption and hardening out of the Gospel: Many souls reasons for more liberty to sinne from mercy; but behold how the Lord backs it with a dreadfull word, *who will by no means clear the guilty*. As many as do not condemn themselves, and judge themselves before his Tribunall of justice, there is no rescinding of the condemnatory sentence, but it stands above your heads, *he that believes not is condemned already*. Justice hath condemned all by a sentence, he that doth

doth not in the sense of this flee unto Jesus Christ from [illegible] and wrath, is already condemned, his sentence is standing there needs no new one since he flees not to mercy for absolution, the sentence of condemnation stands unrepealed. You guilty souls who clear your selves, God will not clear you, and alas, how many of you do clear your selves? Do ye not extenuate and mince your sins. How hard is it to extort any confession of guilt out of you, but in the generall? If we [illegible] descend to particulars, many of you will plead innocency, almost in every thing, though ye have like children learned to speak these words, *that ye are sinners.* I beseech you consider it, it is no light matter, for *God will by no means clear the guilty*, by no means, by no intreaties, no flatteries; what? will he not pardon sin? Yes indeed, his name tels you he will pardon all kind of sins, and absolve all manner of guilty persons, but yet such as do condemn themselves, such as are guilty in their own conscience, and their mouthes stopped before God, you who do not enter in the serious examination of your wayes, and do not arraign your selves before Gods Tribunall daily, till you find your selves loathsome and desperate, and no refuge for you; you who do flatter your selves alwayes in the hope of Heaven, and put the fear of hell alwayes from you, I say, God will by no means, no prayers, no intreaties clear or pardon you, because you come not to Jesus Christ, *in whom is preached forgiveneſſe and remiſſion of sins.* You who take liberty to sin, because God is gracious, and delay repentance till the end, because God is long-suffering, know God will not clear you, he is holy and just as he is mercifull, if his mercy make thee not fear and tremble before him, and do not separate thee from thy sins; if remission of sins be not the strongest perswasion to thy soul of the removing of sin. Certainly thou dost in vain presume upon his mercy. Now consider what influence all this glorious proclamation had on *Moses*, it stirres up in him reverence and affection, reverence to such a glorious Majesty, and great desire to have him amongst them, and to

to be more one with him: If thy soul rightly discover God, it cannot but abase thee, he made haste to bow down and worship: O Gods Majesty is a surprizing and astonishing thing, it would bow thy soul in the dust if it were presented to thee, labour to keep the right and intire representation of God in thy sight, his whole Name, *strong*, *mercifull* and *just*; *great*, *good* and *holy*. I say keep both in thy view, for half representations are dangerous, either to beget presumption, and security, when thou looks on mercy alone, or despair, when thou looks on justice, and power alone; Let thy soul consider all jointly, that it may receive a mixed impression of all, and this is the holy composition, and temper of a beleever, Rejoice with trembling, love with fear; let all thy discoveries of him, aime at more union and Communion with him; such a self-sufficient all-sufficient and eternall being.

JOH. 4. 24. *God is a Spirit, and they who Worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

WE have here something of the nature of God pointed out to us, and something of our duty towards him, *God is a spirit*, that is his nature; and *man must worship him*, that is his duty, and that *in spirit and in truth*, that is the right manner of the duty: if these three were well pondered till they did sink into the bottom of our spirits, they would make us indeed Christians, not in the letter, but in the spirit: That is presupposed to all Christian worship and walking, to know what God is; its indeed the *Primo-cognitum* of Christianity, the first principle of true Religion, the very root out of which springs and growes up, walking suitably with, and worshipping answerably of a known God. I fear much of our Religion be like the Athenians, they builded an Altar to an unknown God, and like the Samaritans, who worshipped they knew not what. Such a worship, I know not what it is, when the God worshiped is not known. The two Parents of true Religion are, the knowledge of God and of our selves, this indeed is the beginning of the fear of God, which the wise Preacher calls the beginning of true wisedom: And these two, as they beget true Religion, so they cannot truely be, one without the other: it is not many notions, and speculations about the divine nature, it is not high and strained conceptions of God, that comprises the true knowledge of him, many think they know something, when they can speak of those mysteries, in some singular way, and in some tearms, removed from common understandings, which neither themselves nor others know what they mean; and thus

thus they are presumptuous, self-conceited, knowing nothing as they ought to know; There is a knowledge that puffes up, and there is a knowledge that casts down, a knowledge in many that doth but swell them, not grow them; Its but a tumor full of wind a vain and empty frothie knowledge, that is neither good for edifying others, nor saving a mans self, a knowledge that a man knows and reflects upon so, as to ascend upon the hight of it, and measure himself by the degrees of it; This is not the true knowledge of God, which knowes not it self, looks not back upon it self, but straight towards God, his holinesse and glory, and our baseneſſe and misery, and therefore it constrains the soul to be ashamed of it self in such a glorious presence, and to make haste to worship, as *Moses*, *Job*, *Isaiah*, did.

This definition of God, if we did truely understand it, we could not but worship him in another manner, *God is a Spirit*; Many ignorant people form in their own mind some likeneſſe, and Image of God who is invisible, you know how ye fancie to your selves some bodily shape when you conceive of him, you think he is some reverend and Majestick person, sitting on a Throne in Heaven; But I beseech you correct your mistakes of him, there is outward idolatry and there is inward, there is idolatry in action, when men paint or ingrave some similitude of God, and there is idolatry in imagination, when the fancy and apprehension runs upon some image, or likenesse of God; the first is among Papists, but I fear the latter be too common among us, and it is indeed all one, to form such a similitude in our minde, and to ingrave or paint it without; so that the God whom many of us worship, is not the living and true God, but a painted or graven idol. When God appeared most visible to the world, as at the giving out of the law, yet no man did see any likeneſſe at all, he did not come under the perception of the most subtle sense, he could not be perceived but by the retired understanding, going aside from all things visible, and there-

fore you do but fancy an idol to your selves, in stead of God, when you apprehend him under the likeneſſe of any visible, or sensible thing, and so whatever love, or fear, or reverence you have, it is all but mispent superstition, the love and fear of an idol.

I. Know then that God is a Spirit, and therefore he is like none of all these things you see, or hear, or smell, or taste, or touch: The Heavens are glorious indeed, the light is full of glory, but he is not like that. If all your senses should make an inquiry and search for him throughout the world, you should not finde him, though he be near hand every one of us, yet your eyes and eares and all your senses, might travell the length of the earth, and breadth of the Sea, and should not finde him, even as you might search all the corners of Heaven, ere you could hear or see an Angel; if you would saw a man asunder, and resolve him in atomes of duſt, yet you could not perceive a soul within him, why? Because these are spirits and so without the reach of your senses.

II. If God be a spirit, then he is invisible, and dwells in light inaccessible, which no man hath seen or can see, then our poor narrow mindes that are drowned, as it were, and immersed into bodies of clay, and in this state of mortality, receives all knowledge by the senses, cannot frame any suitable notion of his spirituall, and abstracted nature; We cannot conceive what our own soul is, but by some sensible operation flowing from it, and the light that our knowledge of that noble part of our selves amounts to, is but this dark, and confused conception, that the soul is some inward principle of life, and sense and reason; how then is it possible for us to conceive aright of the divine nature, as it is in it self? but only in a dark and generall way, we gueſſe at his Majesty, by the glorious emanations of his power, and wisedom, and the rayes thereof which he displayes abroad in all the works of his hands, and from all these concurring testimonies, and evidences of his Majeſtie, we gather this confused notion of him, that he is

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the fountain-self-independent-being, the originall of all these things, and more absolute in the world, then the soul is in the body, the true *Anima mundi*, the very life and the light of men, and the soul that quickens, moves and formes all this visible world, that makes all things visible, and himself is invisible: Therefore it is that the Lord speaks to us in Scripture of himself, according to our capacities, of his face, his right hand and arm, his Throne, his Scepter, his back parts, his anger, his fury, his repentance, his grief, and sorrow; none of which are properly in his spirituall, immortall, and unchangeable nature, but because our dulnesse and slownesse is such, in apprehending things spirituall, it being almost without the sphere and comprehension of the soul while in the body, which is almost addicted unto the senses of the body; Therefore the Lord accommodats himself unto our terms, and notions; *balbutit nobiscum*, he like a kinde father stammers with his stammering children, speaks to them in their own dialect; but withall would have us conceive he is not really such a one, but infinitly removed in his own being from all these imperfections. So when you hear of these terms in Scripture, O beware ye conceive God to be such a one, as your selves, but in these expressions not beseeming his Majestie, because below him; learn your own ignorance of his glorious Majesty, your dulnesse and incapacity to be such, as the holy one must come down as it were in some bodily appearance, ere you can understand any thing of him.

III. If God be a Spirit, then he is most perfect, and most powerfull: all imperfection, all infirmity, and weaknesse in the creature, is founded in the grosse and materiall part of it, you see the more matter and bodily substance be in any thing, it is the more lumpish, heavie and void of all action, it is the more spirituall, pure, and refined part of the creation, that hath most activity in it, and is the principle of all motions and actions; You see a little fly hath more action in it, then a great mountain, because there are spirits in it which move it. The bottom

of the world contains the dregs of the Creation as it were, a masse and lumpe of heavie earth, but the higher and more distant bodies be from that, the more pure and subtill they are; and the more pure and subtil they be, the more action, vertue, and efficacy they have: the earth stands like a dead lump, but the sea moves, and the air being thinner and purer then both, moves more easily and swiftly: but go up higher, and still the motion is swifter, and the vertue and influence is the more powerfull: what is a dead body when the soul and spirit is out of it? It hath no more vertue nor efficacy, then so much clay, although by the presence of the spirit of it, it was active, agile, swift, strong and nimble: so much then as any thing hath of spirit in it, so much the more perfect and powerfull it is. Then I beseech you consider what a one the God of the spirits of all flesh must be, the very fountain spirit, the self-being-spirit. *αυτο πνευμα* When the soul of a man, or the spirit of a horse, hath so much vertue, to stirre up a lump of earth, and to quicken it to many diverse operations, even though that soul and spirit did not, nay, could not make that peece of earth they dwell into, then, what must his power and vertue be, that made all those things? Who gave power and vertue, even, to the spirits of all flesh; *their horses* saith God, *are flesh, and not spirit, Isai.* 30. Because in comparison of his Majesty, the very spirits in them, are but like a dead lump of flesh; If he should draw in his breath (as it were) they would have no more vertue to save the Israelites, nor so many lumps of flesh or clay, for he is the spirit of all spirits, that quickens, actuats, and moves them to their severall operations, and influencies. *Anima mundi, & anima animarum mundi*, an Angel hath more power then all men united in one body, Sathan is called *the Prince of the air*, and *God of this world*, for he hath more efficacy and vertue, to commove the aire, and raise tempests, then all the swarmes of multiplied mankinde, though gathered in one army, if the Lord did not restrain and limite his power, he were able to destroy whole nations

ons at once, an Angel killed many thousands of *Senachiribs* army in one night, what would many Angels do then, if the Lord pleased to apply them to that work? *O what is man that he should magnifie himself*, or glory in strength, or skill? Beasts are stronger then men, but mans weaker strength being strengthned with more skill, proves stronger then they; but in respect of Angels he hath neither strength nor wildome.

IV. If God be a Spirit, then he is not circumscribed by any place; and if an infinite spirit, then he is every where, no place can include him and no body, can exclude him, he is within all things, yet not included nor bounded within them, and he is without all things, yet not excluded from them: *intra omnia, non tamen inclusus in illis, extra omnia nec tamen exclusus ab illis.* You know every body hath its own bounds and limits circumscribed to it, and thoots out all other bodily things out of the same space, so that before the least body want some space, it will put all the universe in motion, and make every thing about it to change its place, and possesse another; but a spirit can pass thorow all of them, and never disturb them; A legion may be in one man, and have roome enough, if there were a wall of brass or tower, having no open, neither above, or beneath, no body could enter, but by breaking thorow and making a breach into it, but an Angel or spirit could storm it without a breach, and pierce thorow it, without any division of it, how much more doth the Maker of all spirits, fill all in all, the thickness of the Earth doth not keep him out, nor the largeness of the Heavens contain him: How then do we circumscribe and limite him within the bounds of a publick house, or the Heavens? O how narrow thoughts have we of his immense greatness? Who without division or multiplication of himself, fills all the corners of the world, whose indivisible unitie is equivalent to an infinite extension, and divisibilitie; how often I pray you, do you reflect upon this, *God is near hand every one of us*, who of us thinks of a divine Majestie nearer us then our very

very ſouls and conſciences, *in whom we live, and move, and have our being?* How is it we move, and think not with wonder of that firſt mover, in whom we move? How is it we live and perſevere in being, and do not alwiſe conſider this fountain-being, in whom we live and have our being? O the atheiſme of many ſouls profeſſing God, we do ſpeak, walk, eat and drink, and go about all our buſineſſes, as if we were ſelf-being, independent of any, never thinking of that all-preſent quickening ſpirit, that acts us, moves us, ſpeaks in us, makes us to walk, and eat and drink, as the barbarous people, who ſee, hear, ſpeak, and reaſon, and never once reflect upon the principle of all theſe, to diſcern a ſoul within. This is brutiſh, and in this, man who was made of a ſtraight countenance to look upward to God, and to know himſelf and his Maker, till he might be differenced from all creatures below, is degenerated, and become like the beaſts that periſh: Who of us beleeves this all-preſent God, we imagine that he is ſhut up in Heaven, and takes not ſuch notice of affaires below, but certainly he is not ſo farre from us: though he ſhow more of his glory above, yet he is as preſent and obſervant below.

V. If he be a Spirit, then as he is incomprehenſible and immenſe in being, ſo alſo there is no comprehenſion of his knowledge. The nearer any creature come to the nature of a ſpirit, the more knowing and underſtanding it is, life is the moſt excellent being, and underſtanding is the moſt excellent life. *Materia eſt imers & mortua*, the nearer any thing is to the earthly matter, as it hath leſſe action, ſo leſſe life and feeling; Man is nearer an Angel then beaſts, and therefore he hath a knowing underſtanding ſpirit in him. There is a ſpirit in man, and the more or leſſe this ſpirit of man is abſtracted from ſenſuall and materiall things, it lives the more excellent and pure life, and is, as it were, more or leſſe delivered from the chains of the body. Theſe ſoules that have never riſen above, and retired from ſenſible things, O how narrow are they, how captivated

captivated within the prison of the flesh? But when the Lord Jesus comes to set free, He delivers a soul from this bondage, he makes these chains fall off, and leads the soul apart to converse with God himself, and to meditate on things not seen, sin, wrath, Hell and Heaven: and the further it goes from it self, and the more abstracted it is from the consideration of present things, the more it lives a life like Angels; And therefore when the soul is separated from the body, it is then perfectly free, and hath the largest extent of knowledge: a mans soul must be almost like *Pauls* (*whether out of the body or in the body, I know not*) if he would understand aright spirituall things: now then this infinite spirit, is an al-knowing spirit, al-seeing spirit; as well as all-present; *there is no searching of his understanding*. Isa. 40. 28. and Psal. 147. 5. *Who hath directed this spirit, or being his counsellour hath taught him?* Rom. 11. 34. and 40. 13. He calls the generations from the beginning, and known to him are all his works from the beginning. O that you would alwayes set this God before you, or rather set your selves alwayes in his presence, in whose sight you are alwayes: How would it compose our hearts to reverence, and fear in all our actions, if we did indeed beleeve that the judge of all the world is an eye-witnesse, to our most retired and secret thoughts and doings? If any man were as privie to thy thoughts, as thy own spirit, and conscience, thou would blush and be ashamed before him; If every one of us could open a window into one anothers spirits, I think this assembly should dissolve as quickly, as that of Christs, when he bade them that were without sin, cast a stone at the woman, we could not look one upon another: O then why are we so little apprehensive of the al-searching eye of God, who can even declare to us our thoughts before it be? How much atheisme is rooted into the heart of the most holy? We do not alwayes meditate with David Psal. 139. on that al-searching and al-knowing spirit, *who knows our down sitting and up rising and understands our thoughts a farre off, and who*

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is acquainted with all our wayes. O how would we ponder our path, and examine our words, and consider our thoughts before hand, if we set our selves in the view of such a spirit, that is within us, and without us, before us, and behind us. He may spare sinners as long as he pleases, for there is no escaping from him; you cannot go out of his dominions, nay, you cannot run out of his presence, *Psal.* 7. 8, 9. he can reach you when he pleases, therefore he may delay as long as he pleases.

JOH. 4. 24. *GOD is a Spirit*, &c.

THere are two common notions engraven on the hearts of all men by nature, that God is, and that he must be worshipped; and these two live and die together, they are clear, or blotted together, according as the apprehension of God is clear, and distinct, and more deeply engraven on the soul, so is this notion of mans duty, of worshipping God clear and imprinted on the soul, and when ever the actions of men do prove, that the conception of the worship of God is obliterate or worn out, when ever their transgressions do witnesse that a man hath not a lively notion of this duty of Gods worship; that doth also prove that the very notion of a God-head is worn out, and cancelled in the soul; for how could souls conceive of God as he is indeed, but they must needs with Moses *Exod.* 34. make haste to pray and worship? It is the principle of the very law of nature, which shall make the whole world inexcusable, *because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God.* A Father must have honour, and a Master must have fear, and God who is the common Parent and absolute Master of all, must have worship, in which, reverence and fear, mixed with rejoicing and affection predomines; it is supposed and put beyond all question that it must be: *he that worships him*, &c. Its not simply said, God is a Spirit and must be worship-

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ped, no, for none can doubt of it. If God be, then certainly worship is due to him, for who is so worshipfull? And because it is so beyond all question, therefore woe, to the irreligious world that never puts it in practise, O what excuse can you have, who have not so much as a forme of godlinesse? Do you not know that its beyond all controversie that God must be worshipped? Why then do you deny it in your practise, which all men must confesse in their conscience? Is not he God the Lord, a living and self-being Spirit? Then must he not have worshippers? Beasts are not created for it, it is you, O sons of men, whom he made for his own praise, and it is not more sutable to your natures, then it is honourable and glorious. This is the great dignity and excellency you are priviledged with, beyond the brute beasts, to have spirits within you capable of knowing and acknowledging the God of your spirits: why then doe you both rob and spoyl God of his Glory, and cast away your own excellency? Why do you love to trample on your ornaments, and wallow in the puddle like beasts void of Religion, but so much worse then beasts, that you ought to be better, and were created for a more noble design. O base spirited wretches, who hang down your souls to this earth, and follows the dictats of your own sense and lust, and have not so much as an external form of worshipping God, how farre are you come short of the noble design of your creation, and the high end of your immortall souls? If you will not worship God, know, he will have worshipers, certainly he will not want it, because he hath designed so many souls to stand before him, and worship him, and that number will not fail: He might indeed have wanted worshippers; For what advantage is it to him? But in this he declares his love and respect to man, that he will not want honour and service from him, it is rather to put honour upon him, and to make him blessed and happy, then for any gain can amount to him by it, for this is indeed the true honour and happinesse of man, not to be worshipped and served of other fellow

low creatures, but to worship and serve the Creator: This is the highest advancement of a soul, to ly low before him, and to obey him, and have our service accepted of his Majesty: I beseech you strive about this noble service, since he must have worshipers. O say within your soule I must be one, if he had but one, I could not be content if I were not that one, since the Father is *seeking worshippers*, v. 23. O let him finde thee, offer thy self to him, saying, Lord, here am I. Should he seek you, who can have no advantage from you? Should he go about so earnest a search for true worshippers, who can have no profite by them? And why do ye not seek him, since to you all the gain and profite redounds? Shal he seek you to make you happy, and why do ye not seek him, and happinesse in him? It is your own service, I may truely say, and not his so much; for in serving him thou dost rather serve thy self, for all the benefite redounds to thy self, though thou must not intend such an end, to serve him for your self, but for his names sake; else thou shal neither honour him, nor advantage thy self. I pray you let him not seek in vain, for in these afflictions, he is seeking worshippers, and if he finde you, you are found and saved indeed. Do not then forsake your own mercy, to run from him who follows you with Salvation.

As none can be ignorant that God is, and must be worshipped, so it is unknown to the world in what manner he must be worshipped: the most part of men have some form in worshipping God, and please themselves in it so well that they think God is well-pleased with it, but few there are who know indeed, what it is to worship him in a manner acceptable to his Majesty: Now you know it is all one not to worship him at all, as not to worship him in that way he likes to be worshipped. Therefore the most part of men are but self-worshippers, because they please none but themselves in it, it is not the worship his soul hath chosen, but their own invention, for you must take this as an undeniable ground, that God must be worshipped according

cording to his own will and pleasure, and not according to your humor, or invention, therefore his soul abhores will-worship, devised by men out of ignorant zeal, or superstition, though there might seem much devotion in it, and much affection to God, as in the Israelites sacrificing their children what more seeming self-denial? And yet what more real self-Idolatry? God owns not such a service, for it is not service and obedience to his will and pleasure, but to mens own will and humor: therefore a man must not look for a reward, but from himself. Now it is not only will-worship, when the matter and substance of the worship is not commanded of God, but also when a commanded worship is not discharged in the appointed manner: therefore, O how few true worshippers will the Father finde? True worship must have *truth*, for the substance, and *spirit*, for the manner of it, else it is not such a worship as the father seeks and will be pleased with; divine worship must have *truth*, in it, that is plain, but what was that *truth*, it must be conformed to the rule and patern of worship, which is Gods will and pleasure, revealed in the word of truth, true worship is the very practise of the word of truth, it carries the image and superscription of a command upon it, which is a necessary ingredient in it, and constituent of it. Therefore if thy service have the image of thy own will stamped on it, it is not divine worship, but will-worship. Thus all humane ceremonies and ordinances enjoyned for service of God, carry the inscription not of God, but of man, who is the author and originall of them, and so are but adulterated and false Coyn, that will not passe current with God, I feare there be many rites and vaine customes among ignorant people, in which they place some Religion which have no ground in the word of God, but are only old wives fables and traditions. How many things of that nature are used upon a religious account in which God hath placed no Religion: Many have a superstitious conceit of the publick place of worship, as if there were more holinesse in it then in any other house; and so they think

think their prayers in the Church are more acceptable then in their chamber; But Christ refutes that superstitious opinion of places, and so consequently of dayes, meats, and all such externall things: The Jews had a great opinion of their Temple, the Samaritans of their mountain, as if these places had sanctified their services: but saith our Lord, *ver.* 21. *the houre cometh when ye shall neither worship in this mountain, &c* but its any where acceptable, if so be ye worship in spirit and truth: many of you account it Religion to pray, and mutter words of your own in the time of publick prayer, but who hath required this at your hand? If ye would pray your selves, go apart, *shut the door behinde thee*, saith Christ: private prayer should be in private, and secret, but when publick prayer is, your hearts should close with the petitions and offer them up jointly to God, it is certainly a great slight of that deceitfull destroyer, the devil to possesse your mindes with an opinion of Religion, in such vain bablings, that he may withdraw both your ears, and your hearts, from the publick worship of God, for when every one is busied with his own prayers, you cannot at all join in the publick service of God, which is offered up in your name: The like I may say of stupid formes of prayer, and tying your selves to a plate forme, written in a book, or to some certain words gotten by the heart, who hath commanded this? Sure, not the Lord, who hath promised his spirit to teach them to pray, and help their infirmities, who know not how, nor what to pray, it is a device of your own, invented by Sathan to queneh the spirit of supplications, which should be the very naturall breathing of a Christian. But there are some so grosely ignorant, of what prayer is, that they make use of the ten Commands, and Beleef as a prayer: so void are they of the knowledge and spirit of God, that they cannot discern betwixt Gods commands to themselves and their own requests to God, betwixt his speaking to men, and their speaking to him, between their professing of him before men; and praying and confessing to him, all this

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is but forged imaginary worſhip, worſhip falſly ſo called, which the Father ſeeks not and receives not.

But what if I ſhould ſay that the moſt part of your worſhip, even that which is Commanded of God, as prayer, hearing, reading &c. hath no truth in it, I ſhould ſay nothing amiſs, for though you do thoſe things that are Commanded, yet not as Commanded, without any reſpect to divine appoyntment, and only becauſe you haue received them as traditions from your fathers, and becauſe yee are taught ſo by the precepts of men, and are accuſtomed ſo to do, therefore the ſtamp of Gods will and pleaſure is not engraven on them, but of your own will, or of the will of men; Let mee poſe your Conſciences, many of you, what difference is there between your Praying, and your plowing, betweene your hearing, and your harrowing, between your reading in the ſcriptures, and your reaping in the Harveſt, between your religious ſervice and your common ordinary actions, I ſay, what difference is there in the riſe of theſe? You do many civill things out of cuſtome or becauſe of the precepts of men: and is there any other principle at the bottom of your religious performances? Do you at all conſider, theſe are divine appointments, theſe have a ſtamp of his authority on them, and from the conſcience of ſuch an immediate command of God, and the deſire to pleaſe him and obey him; do you go about theſe? I fear many cannot ſay it. O I am ſure all cannot, though it may be, all will ſay it: therefore your religious worſhip can come in no other account, then will-worſhip, or man-worſhip, it hath not the ſtamp of truth on it, an expreſſe conformitie to the truth of God as his truth.

But we muſt preſſe this out a little more. Truth is oppoſed to ceremonie and ſhaddow. The ceremonies of old were ſhadows, or the externall body of religion, in which the ſoul and ſpirit of godlineſſe ſhould have been encloſed, but the Lord did alwayes urge more earneſtly the ſubſtance and truth, then the ceremonie the weightier matters of the law, pietie, equitie, and ſobrietie,

tie, then these lighter externall Ceremonies, Hee sets a higher account upon mercy then sacrifice, and upon obedience, then Ceremonies but this people turned it just contrary, they summed up all their religion in some Ceremoniall performance, and seperated these things, God had so nerely conjoined; they would be devout men in offering sacrifices, in their washings, in their rites, and yet made no Conscience of heart and soule pietie towardes God, and upright just dealling with men; Therefore the Lord so often quarrels them, and reflects all their service as being a device and invention of their own, which never entered into his heart, *Isai.* 1. from 10. to 16. *Jer.* 7. throughout, *Isai.* 66. to 6. *Isai.* 28. Now if you will examine it impartially it is even just so with us, there are some externall things in Religion, which in comparison with the weightier things of faith, and obedience, are but ceremoniall, in these you place the most part, if not all your Religion, and think your self good Christians, if you be baptized, and hear the word, and partake of the Lords Table, and such like, though in the mean time you be not given to secret prayer, and reading, and do not inwardly judge and examine your selves, that ye may flee unto a Mediator; Though your conversation be unjust and scandalous among men; I say unto such soules, as the Lord to the Jews, who hath required this at your hands? Who commanded you to hear the word, to be baptized, to walk on publick ordinances? Away with all this it is abomination to his Majesty, though it please you never so well, the more it displeases him, if ye say why commands he us to hear? &c. I say the Lord never commanded these externall ordinances, for the summe of true Religion, that was not the great thing which was in his heart, that he had most pleasure into, but the weightier matters of the Law, piety, equity, and sobriety, a holy and godly conversation adorning the Gospel: *What hath the Lord required of thee, but this, O man? to do justly, and walk humbly with thy God?* So then thou dost not worship him in *truth*, but in a shadow; the *truth* is, holinesse and

righteousnesse, that externall profession is but a ceremony, while you separate these externall ordinances from these weighty duties of piety and justice, they are but as a dead body without a soul. If the Lord required truth of old, much more now, when he hath abolished the multitude of Ceremonies, that the great things of his Law may be more seen and loved.

If you would then be true worshippers, look the whole mind of God, and especially the chief pleasure of Gods mind, that which he most delights into, and by any means do not separate what God hath conjoined, do not divide righteousnesse towards men, from a profession of holinesse to God, else it is but a falshood, a counterfeit Coyn; do not please your selves so much in externall Church-privilledges, without a holy and godly conversation, adorning the Gospel; but let the chief study, endeavour, and delight of your souls, be about that, which God most delights into, let the substantials of Religion have the first place in the soul, pray more in secret, that will be the life of your souls, you ought indeed to attend publick Ordinances, but above all, take heed to your conversation and walking at home, and in secret, prayer in your Familie is a more substantiall worship, then to sit and hear prayer in publick, and prayer in secret is more substantiall then that: The more retired and immediat a duty be, the more weighty it is, the more it crosse thy corruptions, and evidence the stamp of God on thy affections, the more divine it is; And therefore to serve God in these, is to serve him in *truth*. Practice hath more of truth in it then a profession, *When your fathers executed judgement, was not this to know me?* Duties that have more opposition from our natures against them, and lesse fewell or oyl to feed the flame of our self-love and corruption, have more truth in them: and if you should worship God in all other duties, and not especially in those, you do not worship him in *truth*.

Next, let us consider the manner of Divine Worship:

And this is as needfull to true worship as true matter, that it be commanded, and done as it is commanded, that compleats true worship; Now I know no better way or manner to worship God into, then so to worship him as our worship may carry the stamp of his Image upon it, as it may be a glasse wherein we may behold Gods Nature and Properties: For such as himself is, such he would be acknowledged to be; I would think it were true worship indeed which had engraven on it the Name of the true and living God, if it did speak out of so much of it self, that *God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him diligently.* Most part of our service speaks an unknown God, and carries such an inscription upon it, *To the unknown God:* there is so little either reverence, or love, or fear, or knowledg in it, as if we did not worship the true God, but an idol. It is said, that the fool *sayes in his his heart, that there is no God,* because his thoughts and affections, and actions are so little composed to the fear and likenesse of that God, as if he did indeed plainly deny him; I fear it may be said thus of our worship, it sayes, *There is no God,* it is of such a nature that none could conclude from it that it had any relation to the true God, our prayers denies God, because there is nothing of God appears in them: but this is true worship, when it renders back to God his own Image and Name: *Unde repercussus redditur ipse sibi,* as it is a pure and clean Fountain, in which a man may see his shaddow distinctly, but a troubled fountain or myre in which he cannot behold himself; So it is pure worship, which receives and reflects the pure Image of God, but impure and unclean worship, which cannot receive it, and return it. I pray you Christians, consider this, for it is such worshippers the Father seeks, and why seeks he such? but because in them he finds himself (so to speak) his own Image and Superscription is upon them, his mercy is engraven on their faith and confidence; his Majesty and Power is stamped on their humility and reverence; his Goodnesse is to be read on the souls rejoicing; his Great-

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neſſe and Juſtice, in the ſouls trembling. Thus there ought to be ſome engravings on the ſoul anſwering the characters of his glorious Name; O how little of this is amongs them that deſire to know ſomething of God? How little true worſhip, even among them whom the Father hath ſought out to make true worſhippers? But alace, how are all of us unacquainted with this kind of worſhip? We ſtay upon the firſt principles and practices of Religion, and goes not on to build upon the foundation: Sometimes your worſhip hath a ſtamp of Gods holineſſe, and juſtice, in fear and terrour at ſuch a Majeſty, which makes you to tremble before him; But where is the ſtamp of his mercy and grace, which ſhould be written in your faith and rejoicing? Tremble and fear indeed, but rejoice with trembling, becauſe there is mercy with him: Sometimes there is rejoicing and quietneſſe in the ſoul, but that quickly degenerats into carnall confidence, and makes the ſoul turn grace into wantonneſſe, and eſteem of it ſelf above what is right, becauſe it is not counterpoiſed with the ſenſe and apprehenſion of his holineſſe and juſtice; But, O to have theſe joyntly written on the heart, in worſhip, fear, reverence, confidence, humility and faith! That is a rare thing, it is a divine compoſition and temper of ſpirit, that makes a divine ſoul: For the moſt part, our worſhip ſavours and ſmells nothing of God, neither his power, nor his mercy and grace, nor his holineſſe and juſtice, nor his Majeſty and glory; a ſecure, faint, formall way, void of reverence, of humility, of fervency, and of faith: I beſeech you, let us conſider, as before the Lord, how much pains and time we looſe, and pleaſe none but our ſelves, and profite none at all: Stir up your ſelves, as in his ſight, for it is the keeping of our ſouls continually as in his ſight, which will ſtamp our ſervice with his likeneſſe: The fixed and conſtant meditation on God and his glorious properties, this will beget the reſemblance between our worſhip, and the God whom we worſhip, and it will imprint his Image

upon it, and then it should please him, and then it should profite thee, and then it should edifie others.

But more particularly: True worship must have the stamp of Gods spirituall Nature, and be conformed to it in some measure, else it cannot please him: There must be a conformity between God and souls, this is the great end of the Gospel, to repair that Image of God which was once upon man, and make them like God again; Now it is this way that Jesus Christ repairs this Image, and brings about this conformity with God, by the souls worshipping of God suteable to his Nature, which as it grows more and more suitable to Gods Nature, it is the more and more like God, and happy in that likenesse. Now, *God is a Spirit*, therefore (saith Christ) you *must worship him in spirit and truth*. The worship then of Saints must be of a spirituall nature, that it may be like the immortall divine Spirit: It is such worshippers the Father seeks, he seeks souls to make them like himself, and this likenesse and conformity to God, is the very foundation of the souls happinesse, and eternall refreshment.

This is a point of great Consequence, and I fear not laid to heart. The worship must be like the Worshiped, It is a Spirit must Worship the Eternall Spirit, it is not a body that can be the principle and chief Agent in the businesse: What Communion can God have with your bodies while your Souls are removed far from him, more then with Beasts? All society and fellowship must be between these that are like one another; a man can have no comfortable company with Beasts, or with Stones and Trees; It is men that can converse with men, and a Spirit must worship the self-being-Spirit. Do not mistake this, as if under the dayes of the Gospel we were not called to an external and bodily worship, to any service to which our outward man is instrumentall; that is one of the deep delusions of this age, into which some men *reprobat concerning the Faith* have fallen: that there should be no externall Ordinances but that Christi-

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ans are now called to a worſhip, all Spirit, pure Spirit &c. This is one of the Spirits and ſpirituall doctrines (that calls themſelves ſo) which ye muſt not receive, for it is neither the ſpirit of God, nor of Chriſt that teacheth this, not the ſpirit of God the Creator, becauſe He hath made the whole man, Body and Soul, and ſo muſt be worſhipped of the whole man: Hee hath created man in ſuch a capacity as he may offer up externall actions in a reaſonable manner, with the inward affections; as the Lord hath created him ſo ſhould he ſerve Him: every member, every part in its own capacity, the ſoul to preceed, and the body to follow, the Soul to bee the chief worſhipper, and the body its ſervant imployed in the worſhip: True worſhip hath a body and a ſoul, as well as a true man; and as the ſoul ſeparated is not a compleat man, ſo neither is the ſoul ſeparated a compleat worſhipper, without the body; the external Ordinances of God is the body, the inward ſoul affection is the ſpirit, which being joyned together makes compleat worſhip. Neither is it the ſpirit of Chriſt which teacheth this, becauſe our Lord Jeſus hath taught us to offer up our bodies and ſpirits both in a reaſonable ſervice, *Rom.* 12. 1. 2. The ſacrifice of the bodily performance, offered up by the ſpiritual affection, and renewed minde *is a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable and reaſonable:* That ſpirit which dwelt in Chriſt above meaſure, did not think it too baſe to vent it ſelf in the way of external Ordinances, He was indeed above all, above the Law, yet did willingly come under them, to teach us who have ſo much need and want to come under them; He prayed much, he preached, he did ſing and read, to teach us how to worſhip, and how much need wee have of prayer and Preaching: This was not the Spirit Chriſt promiſed to his Diſciples, and Apoſtles, which Spirit did breath moſt lively in the uſe of the externall Ordinances, all their dayes: and this is not the Spirit which was at that hour in which Chriſt ſpoke, *the hour is come and now is,* v. 23. *In which the true worſhip of God,*

shall not be in the external Jewish Ceremonies, and rites, void of all life and inward sense of Piety; but the true worship of God shall bee made up of a soul and body, of Spirit and Truth, of the external appoynted Ordinances according to the word of Truth, and the spirit of Truth; and of the spirit and inward soul-affection and sincerity which shall quicken and actuate that externall performance: There were no such worshippers then as had no use of Ordinances, Christ was not such, His Disciples were not such, therefore it is a new Gospel, which if an Angel would bring from Heaven ye ought not to recieve it.

As it is certain then that both soul and body must be imployed in this businesse, so it is sure that the soul and spirit must be the first mover, and chiefest Agent in it, because it is a spiritual business, and hath relation to the fountain-spirit, which hath the most perfect opposition to all false appearances, and external shews; that part of man that cometh neerest God, must draw neerest in worshipping God, and if that be removed farre away, there is no real Communion with God; men judges according to the outward appearance, and can reach no further then the outward man, but God is an all-searching spirit who trieth the heart and reins, and therefore he will passe another judgement upon your worship, then men can do, because he observes all the secret wanderings and escapes of the heart out of his sight, he misses the soul when you present attentive ears, or eloquent tongues, there is no dallying with His Majesty, painting will not decieve Him, His very Nature is contrare to Hypocrisie, and dissimulation, and what is it but dissimulation, when you present your selves to Religious exercises as his People, but within are nothing like it, nothing awaking, nothing present? O consider my beloved what a one you have to do with! It is not men, but the Father of Spirits, who will not be pleased with what pleases men, or your own flesh, but must have

a Spirit to serve him. Alace what are wee doing with such empty names and shews in Religion? Busied in the outside of worship only, as if we had none to do with but men who have eyes of flesh, all that we do in this kind is lost labour, and will never be reckoned up in the account of true worship: I am sure you know and may reflect upon your selves, that you make Religion but a matter of outward fashion, and external customes; you have never almost taken it to heart in earnest, you frequent the Ordinances, you may have a forme of godlines, consisting in some outward performances and privi'edges, and O! how void and destitute of all Spirit and Life, and Power? Not to speak of the removal of affection, and the imploying of the marrow of your soul upon base lusts, and creatures, or the scattering of your desires abroad amongst them, for that is too palpable; but even your very thoughts and minds are removed from this busines, you have nothing present but an ear, or eye and your minds is about other busineſſe, your desires, your fears, your joyes, and delights, your affections never did run in the Channell of Religious exercises, all your passion is vented in other things, but here you are blockish and stupid, without any sensible apprehension of God, his Mercy, or Justice, or Wrath, or of your own misery and want, you sorrow in other things but none here, none for sin, you joy for other things, but none here, you cannot rejoice at the Gospel. Prayer is a burthen not a delight, if your spirits were chiefly imployed in Religious duties, Religion would be almost your Element, your pleasure and recreation, but now it is wearisome to the flesh, because the spirit taketh not the chief weight upon it, Oh be not deceived! God is not mocked, you do but mock your selves with externall shewes while you are satisfied with them: *I* beseech you look inwardly and be not satisfied with the outward appearance, but ask at thy soul, where it is? and how it is? retire within, and bring up thy spirit to this work; I am

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ſure you may obſerve that any thing goes more ſmoothly and ſweetly with you, then the worſhip of God, becauſe your minde is more upon any thing elſe, I fear the moſt part of us who indeavour in ſome meaſure, to ſeek God, have too much droſſe of outward formality and much ſcum of filthy Hypocriſie and guile, O! pray that the preſent furnace may purge away this ſcum: It is the great ground of Gods preſent controverſie with *Scotland*, but alace, the Bellows are like to burn, and we not to be purged, our ſcum goes not out from us, we ſatisfie ourſelves with ſome outward exerciſes of Religion, cuſtome undoes us all, and it was never more undoing then when indignation and wrath is purſuing it: Oh that you would ponder what you looſe by it, both the ſweetneſſe and advantage of godlineſſe, beſide the diſhonour of God. You take a formall, negligent, and ſecure way, as the moſt eaſie way, and the moſt pleaſing to your fleſh, and I am perſwaded you find it the moſt difficult way, becauſe you want all the pleaſant and ſweet refreſhment, and ſoul-delights you might have in God, by a ſerious and diligent minding of Religion. The pleaſure and ſweetneſſe of God taſted and found, will make diligence and paines more eaſie, then ſloathfulneſſe can be to the ſloathfull, this oyls the wheels, and makes them drive ſwiftly; formality makes them drive heavily: Thus you live alwayes in a complaining humor, *ſighing, and going backward*, becauſe you have ſome ſtirring principle of conſcience within, which beares witneſſe againſt you, and your formall ſluggiſh diſpoſition on the other hand, refuſes to awake and work, you are perplexed and tormented between the two, when thy ſpirit and affections goes one way, and thy body another; when thy Conſcience drives on the Spirit, and thy affections draws back, it muſt needs be an unpleaſant buſineſſe.

DEUT. 6. 4. *Here O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord.*

1 JOH. 5. 7. *There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe three are one.*

GReat is the myſtery of Godlineſſe, 1 *Tim* 3. 16. Religion and true Godlineſſe is a bundle of excellent myſteries, of things hid from the world, yea, from the wiſe men of the world, 1 *Cor.* 2. and not only ſo, but ſecrets in their own nature, the diſtinct knowledge wherof is not given to Saints in this eſtate of diſtance and abſence from the Lord: There is almoſt nothing in divinity, but it is a myſtery in it ſelf, how common ſoever it be in the apprehenſions of men, for it is mens overſight, and common, and ſlender apprehenſions of them, which makes them look ſo commonly upon them, there is a depth in them, but you will not know it, till you ſearch it, and ſound it, and the more you ſound, you ſhall find it the more profound: But there are ſome myſteries ſmall, and ſome great, there is a difference amongſt them, all are not of one ſtature, of one meaſure: The myſtery of Chriſts Incarnation, and Death, and Reſurrection, is one of the great myſteries of Religion. *God manifeſted in the fleſh*, yet I conceive there is a greater myſtery then it, and of all Myſteries in nature or divinity, I know none to this, the Holy Trinity, and it muſt needs be greateſt of all, and without controverſie greateſt, becauſe it is the beginning and end of all, *fons & finis omnium*, all myſteries have their riſe here, and all of them return hither. This is furtheſt removed from the underſtandings of men, what God himſelf is, for himſelf is infinitly above any manifeſtation of himſelf: God is greater then God manifeſted in the fleſh, though in this reſpect he be too great for us to conceive. There is a naturall

turall deſire in all men to know, and if any thing be ſtrange and wonderfull, the deſire is more inflamed after the knowledge of it, the very difficulty or impoſſibility of attaining it, in ſtead of reſtraining the curioſity of mans ſpirit, doth rather incenſe it. *Nitimur in vetitum* is the fruit, the ſad fruit we plucked and eat from the Tree of knowledge of good and evill. If the Lord reveal any thing plainly in his Word to men, that is deſpiſed and ſet at naught, becauſe it is plain, whereas the moſt plain truths, which are beyond all controverſie, are the moſt neceſſary and moſt profitable for our eternall ſalvation; but if there be any ſecret myſtery in the Scriptures, which the Lord hath only pointed out, more obſcurely to us, reſerving the diſtinct and clear underſtanding of it to himſelf, *Deut.* 29. 26. that is the Aple which our accurſed natures will long for, and catch after, though there be never ſo much choiſe of excellent ſaving fruit in the Paradiſe of the Scriptures beſides. If the Ark be covered to keep men from looking into it, that doth rather provoke the curious ſpirit of man to pry into it, 1 *Sam.* 6. 19. If the Lord ſhew his wonderfull glory in the Mount, and diſcharge his people to come near, leſt the glorious preſence of God kill them, he muſt put rails about it, to keep them back, or elſe they will be medling, ſuch is the unbridled licence of our minds, and the perverſe diſpoſitions of our natures, that where God familiarly invites us to come, what he earneſtly preſſeth us to ſearch and know, that we deſpiſe as triviall and common; and what he compaſſeth about with a divine darkneſſe of inacceſſible light, and hath removed far from the apprehenſions of all living, that we will needs ſearch into, and wander into theſe forbidden compaſſes, with daring boldneſſe. I conceive this holy and profound myſtery is one of theſe ſecrets which belongs to God to know, for *who knows the Father but the Son, or the Son but the Father*, or *who knoweth the mind of God but the Spirit*; yet the foolish minds of men will not be ſatisfied with the

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beleeving ignorance of ſuch a myſtery, but will needs enquire into theſe depths, that they may find ſatisfaction for their reaſon, but as it happeneth with men who will boldly ſtare upon the Sun, their eyes are dazled and darkned with its brightneſſe; or thoſe that enter into a Labyrinth, which they can find no way to come out, but the further they go in it, the more perplexed it is, and the more intricate; even ſo it befalls many unſober and preſumptuous ſpirits, who not being ſatisfied with the ſimple truth of God, clearly aſſerting that this is endeavour to examine it according to reaſon, and to ſolve all the objections of carnall wit and reaſon (which is often enimity to God) not by the ſilence of the Scriptures, but by anſwers framed according to the ſeverall capacities of men, I ſay, all this is but daring to behold the infinite glory of God with eyes of fleſh, which makes them darkened in minds, and evanliſhing in their expreſſions, while they ſeek to behold this inacceſſible light, while they enter in an endleſs Labyrinth of difficulties, out which the breed of reaſon and diſputation can never extricat them or lead them forth. But the Lord has ſhewed us a more excellent way, though it may be deſpicable to men; Man did fall from bleſſednes, by this curious and wretched ayme at ſome higher happineſs, and more wiſdome. The Lord hath choſen another way to raiſe him up againe by faith, rather then knowledge, by beleeving, rather then diſputing: Therefor the great command of the Goſpel is this, to receive with a ready and willing minde, whatſoever the Lord ſaith to us, whatſoever it may appear to ſenſe and reaſon, to diſpute no more, to ſearch no more into the ſecret of divine myſteries, as if by ſearching we could finde them out unto perfection, but to beleeve what is ſpoken, *till the day break, and the ſhaddows flee away*, and the darkneſſe of ignorance be wholly diſpelled, by the riſing of the Sun of righteouſneſſe. We are called then to receive this truth that God is one, truely one, and yet there are three in this one, the Father Son and Holy Ghoſt: This I ſay you muſt beleeve, be-

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cauſe the wiſedom of God ſaith it, though you know not how it is, or how it can be, though it ſeem a contradiction in reaſon, a *Trinitie* in *Unitie*, yet you muſt lead your reaſon captive to the obedience of faith, and ſilence it with this one anſwer, *the Lord hath ſaid it*; If thou go one to diſpute and to enquire how can theſe things be? Thou art eſcaped from under the power of faith, and art fled unto the tents of humane wiſedom, where thou may learn Atheiſme, but no Religion, *for the world through wiſedom knew not God*, 1 *Cor* 1. And certainly whoever he be that will not quiet his conſcience, upon the bare word of truth in this particular, but will call in for the help of reaſon and diſputation, how to underſtand and maintain it, I think he ſhall be further from the true knowledge of God, and ſatisfaction of minde then before; There is no way here, but to flee in to Pauls Sanctuary, *who are thou O man that diſputs?* Whenever thou thinks within thy ſelf, how may this be, how can one be three, and three one, then withall let this of Pauls ſound in thine ears, *who art thou O man who diſputs?* Think that thou art man, think that he is God: beleeving ignorance is much better then raſh and preſumptuous knowledge, ask not a reaſon of theſe things, but rather adore and tremble, at the myſtery and Majeſty of them. Chriſtianity is fooliſhneſſe to the world upon this account, becauſe its an implicitie faith (ſo to ſpeak) given to God; but there is no fear of being deceived; though *he lead thee blinde by a way they know not*, yet he cannot lead them wrong, this holy ſimplicitie in beleeving every word of God, and truſting without more trying by diſputation, is the very Character of Chriſtianity, and it will be found only true wiſedom, for if any will become wiſe, he muſt be a fool in mens account, that he may be wiſe, he muſt quite his reaſon, to learn true Religion, which indeed is a more excellent and divine reaſon, neither is it contrary to it, though it be high above it.

In this place of *Moſes* you have the Unitie of God aſ-

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ſerted, *the Lord thy God is one Lord*; And that is indeed engraven on the very hearts of men by nature, that God is one, for all may know that the common notion and apprehenſion of God is, that he is a moſt perfect being, the originall of all things, moſt wiſe, moſt powerfull, and infinite in all perfections. Now common reaſon may tell any man that there can be but one thing moſt perfect and excellent, there can be but one infinite, one Almighty, one beginning and end of all, one firſt mover, one firſt cauſe, of whom are all things, and who is of none.

Again in this place of *John* ye have a Teſtimony of the bleſſed Trinitie of Perſons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, in that holy Unitie of eſſence; The great point which *John* hath in hand, is this fundamentall of our Salvation, that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, in whom all our confidence ſhould be placed, and upon whom we ſhould lean the weight of our ſouls. and this he approves by a two-fold Teſtimony, one out of Heaven, another in the Earth, There are three bearing witneſſe to this truth in Heaven, *the Father, the word,* (that is Jeſus Chriſt the eternall Son of God, whom this Apoſtle calls the word of God, or wiſedom of God, *Joh.* 1. 1.) *and the Holy Ghoſt.* The Father witneſſed to this truth in an audible voice out of Heaven, when Chriſt was baptized *Mat.* 3. 17. *This is my well-beloved Son hear him,* here the Fathers Teſtimony of the Son when he was baptized, which was given very ſolemnly in a great Congregation of people, and divinely, with great Glory and Majeſty from Heaven; as if the heavens had opened upon him; and the inacceſſible light of God had ſhined down on him, which was confirmed in the transfiguration, *Mat.* 17. 5. Where the Lord gave a glorious evidence to the aſtoniſhment of the three Diſciples, how he did account of him, how all Saints and Angels muſt ſerve him: *Him hath God the Father ſealed,* ſaith *John,* indeed the ſtamp of divinity, of the divine i-

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mage, in such an excellent manner upon the man Christ, was a Seal set on by God the Father, signifying and confirming his approbation of his well-beloved Son, and of the work he was going about. Then the Son himself did give ample Testimony of this, this was the subject of His Preaching to the World. *I am the light and life of men, he that believeth on me shall bee saved*; And therefore he may be called *the word of God, and the wisedom of God*, Joh. 1. 1. Prov. 8. Because he hath revealed unto us the blessed mystery of Wisdome concerning our Salvation, He is the very expression and Character of the Fathers Person, and Glory, *Heb:* 1. in his own person, and He hath revealed and expressed His Fathers mind, and His own office so fully to the world, that there should be no more doubt of it, out of the mouth of these two witnesses this word might be established: But for superabundance, behold a third, the Holy Ghost witnessing at His Baptisme, in His Resurrection, after His Ascension, the Holy Ghost signifieth His presence and consent to that work, in the similitude of a Dove, the Holy Ghost testified it in the power that raised him from the dead, the Holy Ghost put it beyond all question when He descended upon the Apostles according to Christs promise. For the other three witnesses on earth, we shal not stay upon it, only know that the work of the regeneration of souls, by the power of the Word and Spirit signified by water, the justification of guilty souls signified by the blood of Jesus Christ, and the testimony of the Spirit in our Consciences, bearing witnesse to our spirits, is an assured testimony of this, that Jesus Christ in whom we believe, is *the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* The changing, pacifying, and comforting of souls in such a wonderfull manner, cryes aloud, that He in whom the soul believes is the true and living God, *whom to know is eternal life.* But mark I pray you the accuracy of the Apostle in the change of speech, these three witnesses on earth (saith he) *agree in one*, in giving

ving one common teſtimony to the Son of God, and Saviour of ſinners: But as for the heavenly witneſſes, the *Father*, the *Word*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, however they be three, after an inconceiveable manner, and that they do alſo agree in one common teſtimony to the Mediator of men, yet moreover *they are one*, they not only agree in one, but are one God, one ſimple undivided ſelf-being-infinit Spirit, holden out to us in three Perſons the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, to whom be praiſe and glory.

Deut. 6. 4. and, *Joh.* 5. 7.

ALL Scripture is given by inſpiration of God, and it is profitable for inſtruction, for direction, &c. There is no refuſe in it, no ſimple and plain Hiſtory, but it tends to ſome edification, no profound or deep myſtery, but it is profitable for ſalvation, whatſoever ſecrets there be in the myſteries of God, which is reſerved from us; though it be given us, but to know in part, and darkly thorow a vail, yet as much is given us to know as may make *the man of God perfect in every good work*, as much as is given to know as may build us up to eternal ſalvation: If there were no more uſe of theſe deep myſteries of the Holy Trinity, &c. but to ſilence all fleſh and reſtrain the unlimited ſpirits of men, and keep them within the bounds of ſobriety and Faith, it were enough: That great ſecret would teach as much by its ſilence and darkneſs, as the plainer Truths do by ſpeaking out clearly: O that this great myſtery did compoſe our hearts to ſome reverend and awfull apprehenſion of that God we have to do with, and did imprint in our ſoul, a more feeling ſenſe of our darkneſs and ignorance, this were more advantage then all the gain of light, or increaſe of knowledge that can come from the ſearch

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of curiosity. If men would labour to walk in that light they have attained, rather then curiously inquire after what they cannot know by inquiry, they should sooner attain more true Light, if men would set about the practice of what they know, without doubt, they would more readyly come to a resolution and clearnesse in doubtfull things. Religion is now turned into questions and school-debats, Men begin to beleeve nothing, but dispute every thing, under a pretence of searching for light and resolution, but for the most part while men look after Light, they darken themselves, and this is the righteous judgement of the Lord upon the world, that doth not recieve the Truth in Love, or walk in the light of what they have already attained; therefore He gives men up to wander in their search into the dark dungeons of humane Wisedom, and fancy, and to losse what they have already. If those things which are without all controversie (as the Apostle speaks 1 *Tim.* 3.16.) were indeed made conscience of, and imbraced in Love, and practised; it were beyond all controversie, that the most part of present controversies would cease. But it fals out with many, as with the dog, that catching at a shaddow in the water, lost the the substance in his teeth; so they pursuing after new discoveries in controverted things, and not taking a Heart-hold and inward grippe of the substantiall Truths of the Gospel, which are beyond all controversie, do even losse what they have. Thus *Even that which they have not is taken from them*, because though they have it in judgement, yet they have it not surely and solidly in affection, that it may be holden. So to this present point, if we could learn to adore and admire this *Holy, Holy, Holy One*; if we could in silence and faith sit down and wonder at this mystery, it would be more profitable to us, and make way for a clearer manifestation of God, then if we should search and enquire into all the Volums that are written upon it, thinking by this means to satisfie our reason. I think there is more

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profoundnesse in the sobriety of faith, then in the depths of humane wisedom and learning, when the mystery is such an infinite depth. O but mens eloquence and wisdome must be shallow, far too shallow either to find it out, or unfold it.

But there is yet both more instruction and consolation to be pressed out of this mystery, and therefore, if you cannot reach it in it self, O consider what it concerns us, how we may be edified by it, for this is true Religion. Look upon that place of *Moses*, what is the great instruction he draws from this unity of Gods essence, v. 5. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*, since God is one, then have no God but one, and that the true and living God; and this is the very first command of God, which flowes as it were immediatly from his absolute oneneſſe and perfection of being: There is no man but he must have some God, that is, some thing whereupon he placeth his affection most, every man hath some one thing he loves, and respects beyond all other things, some Lord and Master that commands him, therefore, saith Christ, *no man can serve two masters*; before a man want a God to love and serve, he will make them, and then worship them, yea, he will make himself, his belly, his back, his honour, and pleasur, a God, and sacrifice all his affections, and desires, and endeavours to these: The naturall subordination of man to God, the relation he hath as a creature to a Creator, is the first and fundamentall relation, beyond all respects to himself, or other fellow creatures; this is the proto-naturall obligation upon the creature, therefore it should have returned in a direct line to his Majesty all its affections, and endeavours: But mans fall from God, hath made a wretched throw, and crook in the soul, that it cannot look any more after him, but bowes downward towards creatures below it, or bends inwardly towards it self, and so since the fall, man hath turned his heart from the true God, and set it upon vanity, upon lying vanities, upon base dead idols, which can neither

help him, nor hurt him, your hearts are gone a-whooring from God, O that ye would believe it, none of you will deny, but ye have broken all the Commands, yet such is the brutish ignorance and stupidity of the most part, that you will not confesse that when it comes to particulars, and especially if you should be challenged for loving other things more then God, or having other Gods besides the true God, you will instantly deny it, and that with an asseveration and averlation, God forbid that I have another God: alas this shews that what you confesse in Generalk is not beleeved in the heart, but only is like the prating of children, whom you may learn to say any thing, I beseech you consider that what ye give your time, pains, thoughts, and affections to, that is your God, you must give God all your heart, and so retaine nothing of your own will if God be your God. But do ye not know that your care, and grief, and desire, and love, vents another way, towards base things? you know that you have a will of your own, which goeth quite contrare to his holy will in all things, therefore Satan hath bewitched you, and your hearts deceived you, when they perswade you that you have had no other God but the true God. Christianity raises the soul again, and advances it by degrees to this love of God, from which it had fallen, the soul returns to its first husband, from whom it went a whooring, and now the stamp of God is so upon it, that it is changed into his Image and glory, having tasted how good this one self-sufficient-good is, it gladly and easily divorces from all other lovers, it renounces former lusts of ignorance, and now begins to live in another, love transplants the soul into God, and in him it lives, and with him it walks, it is true this is done gradually, their is much of the heart yet unbroken to this sweet and easie yoke of love, much of the corrupt nature untamed, unreclaimed, yet so much is gained by the first conversion of the soul to God, that all is given up to him in affection and desire, he hath the chief place in the soul,

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the disposition of the spirit hath some stamp and impression of his oneneſſe and singularity; My beloved is one, though a Christian is not wholly rid of strange Lords, yet the tye of subjection to them is broken. they may often intrude by violence upon him, but he is in an hostile posture of affection, and endeavour against them. I beseech you since the Lord is one, and there is none beside him, O let this be engraven on your hearts, that your inward affection and outward actions may expresse that one Lord to be your God, and none other beside him: It is a great shame and reproach to Christians, that they do not carry the stamp of the first principle of Religion, upon their walking, the condition and conversation of many declares how little account they make of the true God, why do ye enslave your souls to your lusts, and the service of the flesh, if ye beleeve in this one God? Why do ye all things to please your selves, if this one Lord be your one God? As for you the Israel of God who are called by Jesus Christ to partake with the Commonwealth of Israel, in the Covenant of promises, hear I beseech you this, and let your souls incline to it, and receive it, your God is one Lord, have you no other Lords over your souls and consciences; not your selves, nor others.

But in the next place let us consider to what purpose John leads such three witnesses, that we may draw some consolation from it, The thing testified and witnessed unto, is the ground work of all a Christians hope and consolation, that Jesus Christ is the eternall Son of God, and Saviour of the world, one able to save to the outmost all that put their trust in him, so that every soul that finds it self lost, and not able to subsist nor abide the judgement of God, may repose their confidence in him, and lay the weight of their eternall welfare upon his death and sufferings, with assurance to finde rest and peace in him to your souls. He is such a one as faith may triumph in him over the world, and all things beside, a beleever may

triumph in his victories, and in the faith of his victorie over hell, and death, and the grave, may overcome personally, *for this is our victory over the world, even our faith*, vers. 4. And how could a soul conquere by faith, if he in whom it beleeves were not declared to be the Son of God with power, there is nothing so mean and weakly as faith in it self, its a poor despicable thing of it self, and that it sees, and that it acknowledges, yea, faith is a very act of self-denyal, its a renouncing of all help without and within it self, save onely that which is laid on Christ Jesus; therefore it were the most unsutable mean of prevailing, and the most insufficient weapon for gaining the victory, if the object of it were not the strong God, the Lord Almighty, from whom it derives and borrows all its power and vertue, either to pacifie the conscience, or to expiate sin, or to overcome the world. Oh consider Christians where the foundation of your hopes is situated, it is in the divine power of our Saviour, if he who declared so much love and good will to sinners, by becoming so low, and suffering so much, have also all power in Heaven and Earth, if he be not onely man near us, to make for us boldnesse of accesse, but God neer God, to prevail effectually with God, then certainly he is *a sure foundation laid in Zion, elect and precious*, he is an unmoveable Rock of ages, whosoever trusts their soul to him shal not be ashamed. I am sure that many of you considers not this, that Christ Jesus who was in due time born of the Virgin Mary, and died for sinners, is the Eternall Son of God, equall to his Father in all Glory and Power, O how would this make the Gospel a great mystery to souls, and the Redemption of souls a precious and wonderfull work, if it were considered. Would not souls stand at this anchor immoveable in tentation, if their faith were pitched on this sure foundation, and their hope cast upon this solid ground: O know your Redeemer is strong and mighty, and none can pluck you out of his hand, and himself will cast none out that comes. If the multitude

multitude of you beleeved this, you would not make so little account of the Gospel that comes to you, and make so little of your sins which behoved to be taken away by the blood of God, and could be expiate by no other propitiation, you would not think it so easie to satisfie God with some words of custome, and some publick services of form as you do, you would not for all the world deal with God alone without this Mediator; and being convinced of sin (if you beleeved this solidly that he in whom forgiveneſſe of sin and Salvation is preached, is the same Lord God of whom you hear in the old Testament, who gave out the Law, and inspired the Prophets, the onely begotten of the Father in a way infinitely removed from all created capacities) you could not but finde the Father well satisfied in him, and finde a sufficient ransome in his death and doings to pacifie God, and to settle your consciences.

But as the thing testified is a matter of great consolation, so the witnesses testifying to this fundamentall of our Religion, may be a ground of great encouragement to discouraged souls. It is ordinary, that the apprehensions of Christians takes up Jesus Christ as very lovely, and more loving then any of the Persons of the God-head, either the Father or the Holy Ghost, there are some thoughts of estrangednesse and distance of the Father, as if the Son did really reconcile and gaine him to love us, who before hated us, and upon this mistake the soul is filled with continuall jealousies, and suspitions of the love of God: But observe, I beseech you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all of them first agreeing in one Testimony, the Father declares from Heaven, that he is abundantly well pleased with his Son, not only because he is his Son, but even in the undertaking and performing of that work of Redemption of sinners; It is therefore his most serious invitation, and peremptor command to all to hear him, and believe in him, *Mat.* 3. 17. 1 *Joh.* 3. 23. Nay, If we speak more properly, our salvation it is not the businesse of Christ a-

lone, as we imagine it, but the whole God-head is interested in it deeply, and so deeply, that you cannot say who loves it most, or likes it most. The Father is the very Fountain of it, his love is the Spring of all, *God so loved the world that he hath sent his Son.* Christ hath not purchased that eternall love to us, but is rather the gift, the free gift of eternall love. And therefore as we have the Son delighting among the sons of men, *Prov.* 8. and delighting to be imployed and to do his will, *Psalm* 40. So we have the Father delighting to send his Son, and taking pleasure in instructing him, and furnishing him for it, *Isai.* 42. 1. And therefore Christ often professeth that he was not about his own work, but the Father's work who sent him, and that it was not his own will, but his Fathers, he was fulfilling. Therefore we would not look upon the head spring of our salvation in the Son, but rather ascend up to the Father, whose love and wisdome did frame all this: And thus we may be confident to come to the Father in the Son, knowing that it was the love of the Father that sent the Son, though indeed we must come to him only in the Son, in the Name of Christ, and faith of acceptation through a Mediator, not because the Mediator purchaseth his good-will, but because his love and good-will only vents in his beloved Son Christ, and therefore he will not be known nor worshipped but in him, in whom he is near sinners, and reconciling the world to himself. And then the Holy Ghost concurrs in this testimony, and as the Son had the work of purchasing rights and interests to grace and glory, so the great work of applying all these priviledges to Saints, and making them actually partakers of the blessings of Christ his death, is committed in a speciall way to the Holy Ghost, *I will send the Comforter,* &c. So then Father, Son, and Holy Ghost all agree in one, that Jesus Christ is a sure refuge for sinners, a plank for ship-broken men, a firm and sure foundation to build everlasting hopes upon, there is no party dissenting in all the Gospel, the businesse

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of the salvation of lost souls is concluded in this holy Councill of the Trinity with one voice, as at first all of them agreed to make man, *Let us make man*, so again they agree to make him again to restore him to life in the second *Adam*. Who ever thou be that would flee in to God for mercy, do it in confidence, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are ready to welcome thee, all of one mind to shut out none, to cast out none. But to speak properly, it is but one love, one will, one Counsell, and purpose in the Father, Son, and Spirit, for these three are one, and not only agree in one, they are one, and what one loves or purposes, all love and purpose. I would conclude this matter with a word of direction how to worship God, which I cannot express in fitter terms then these of *Nazianzen*. *I cannot think upon one, but by and by I am compassed about with the brightnesse of three, and I cannot distinguish three, but I am suddenly driven back unto one*: There is great ignorance and mistake of this even amongst the best Christians, the grosser sort when they hear of one God onely, thinks Christ but some eminent man, and so direct their prayers to God only, excluding the Son, and Holy Ghost, or when they hear of three Persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, they straight way divide their worship, and imagines a Trinitie of Gods; And I fear these of us who know most, use not to worship God as he hath revealed himself, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and yet one God, our minds are reduced to such a simple unity, as we think upon one of them alone, or else distracted and divided into such a plurality, that we worship in a manner three Gods in stead of one. It is a great mystery to keep the right middle way. Learn, I beseech you, so to conceive of God, and so to acknowledge him, and pray to him, as you may do it in the Name of Jesus Christ, that all the Persons may have equall honour, and all of them one honour, that while you consider one God, you may adore that sacred and blessed Trinitie, and while you worship that holy Trini-

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ty, you may straight way be reduced to an unity. To this wonderfull and Holy One Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all praise and glory.

EPH. 1.1. *Who worketh all things after the counsell of his own will.*

JOB 23. *He is in one mind, and who can turn him,* &c.

HAving spoken something before of God, in His Nature, and being, and Properties, we come in the next place to consider his glorious Majesty as he stands in some nearer relation to his creature, the works of his hands; For we must conceive the first rise of all things in the world, to be in this self-being, the first conception of them to be in the womb of Gods everlasting Purpose and Decree, which in due time, according to his appointment, brings forth the child of the creature to the light of actuall existence and being: It is certain that his Majesty might have endured for ever, and possessed himself without any of these things, if he had never resolved to create any thing without himself, he had been as blessed then as now, because of his full and absolute self-sufficient perfection. His purposing to make a world, and his doing of it adds nothing to his inward blessednesse and contentment; this glorious and Holy One, incloses within his own being, all imaginable perfections, in an infinite and transcendent manner that if you remove all created ones, you diminish nothing, if you adde them all, you encrease nothing. Therefore it was the superabundance of His perfection, that He resolved to shew His Glory thus in the world: It is the creatures indigence and limited condition, which maketh it needfull to go without its own compass

compaſſe; for the happineſſe of its own being: Man cannot be happy in loving himſelf, he is not ſatisfied with his own intruſick perfections, but hee muſt diffuſe himſelf by his affections and deſires, and endeavours, and as it were, walk abroad upon theſe legs, to ſeek in ſupply from the creatures or Creator: The creature is conſtrained out of ſome neceſſity thus to go out of it ſelf, which ſpeaks much indigence and want within it ſelf: But it is not ſo with His Majeſty, His own Glorious being contents Him, His happineſſe is to know that, and delight in it, becauſe it comprehends in it ſelf all, that is at all poſſible, in the moſt excellent and perfect manner that is conceivable; nay infinitly beyond what can be conceived by any but himſelf, ſo He needs not go without Himſelf to ſeek love or delight, for it is all within Him, and it cannot be without His own being, unleſſe it flow from within Him, therefore ye may find in Scripture what complacency God hath in himſelf, and the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father: Wee find, *Prov.* 8. How the wiſdom of God our Lord Jeſus was the Fathers delight from all Eternity, and the Father again His delight, for He rejoiced alwayes before Him, v. 30. And this was an alſufficient poſſeſſion that one had of another, v. 22. the love between the Father and the Son is holden out as the firſt Pattern of all Loves and Delights. *Joh.* 17. 23. 24. This then flowes from the infinite exceſſe of perfection and exundance of ſelf-being, that His Majeſty is pleaſed to come without Himſelf, to manifeſt His own Glory in the works of His hands, to decree and appoint other things beſide Himſelf, and to execute that decree.

Wee may conſider in theſe words ſome particulars for our edification, 1. That the Lord hath from Eternity purpoſed within Himſelf, and decreed to manifeſt His own Glory in the making and ruling of the World, that there is a Counſel and purpoſe of His will, which reaches all things, which have been, are now, or are to be after this. This is clear, for *Hee works all things according*

to the Counsell of his will. 2. That his mind and purpose is one mind, one Counsel: I mean not only one for ever, that is perpetuall, and unchangeable, as the words speaks, but also *one for all*; that is with one simple Act or resolution of His holy Will, He hath determined, all these several things, all their times, their conditions, their circumstances. 3. That whatsoever Hee hath from all Eternity purposed, Hee in time practiseth it, and comes to execution and working, so that there is an exact correspondance betwixt His Will and His Work, His mind and His hand, *Hee works according to the Counsel of His Will, and whatsoever His Soul desireth, that Hee doeth.* 4. That His purpose and performance, is infallible, irresistible by any created power, Himself will not change it, *for Hee is in one mind*, and none else can hinder it, *for who can turn Him?* He desireth and He doeth it, as in the original, there is nothing interveens between the desire and the doing, that can hinder the meeting of these two.

The first is the constant Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures of which ye would consider, 4. things. 1. That His purpose and decree is most wise, therefore *Paul* cryes out upon such a subject, *O the depth of the riches both of the Wisedom and Knowledge of God.* Rom. 11. 33. His will is alwayes one with Wisedom, therefore you have the purpose of His Will mentioned thus, the Counsel of His Will, for His Will (as it were) takes Counsel and advise of Wisedom, and discerns according to the depth and riches of His knowledge and understanding. Wee see among men these are separated often, and there is nothing in the world so disorderly, so unruly and uncomely, as when Will is divided from Wisedom, when men follow their own will and lusts as a Law, against their conscience, that is monstrous: The understanding and reason are the eyes of the Will, if these be put out, or if a man leave them behind him, hee cannot but fall into a pit. But the purposes of Gods Will are depths of Wise-

dom

dom, nay, His very will is a ſufficient Rule and Law, ſo that it may be well uſed of Him, *ſtat pro ratione voluntas*, Rom. 9. 13, 14. 15. If wee conſider the glorious fabrick of the world, the order eſtabliſhed in it, the ſweet harmony it keepeth in all its motions and ſucceſſions; O it muſt be a wiſe minde, and Counſel contrived it. Man now having the Idea of this world in his mind, might fancy and Imagine many other worlds, bearing ſome proportion and reſemblance to this, but if he had never ſeen nor known this world, he could never have imagined the thouſand part of this world, he could in no wayes have formed an image in His mind of all theſe different kinds of creatures, creatures muſt have ſome example and coppy to look to, but what was his pattern? *Who hath been His Counſellour to teach him?* Rom. 11. 34. Who gave him the firſt Rudiments or principls of that Art? ſurely none, Hee had no pattern givin Him, no the leaſt Idea of any of theſe things furniſhed Him, but it is abſolutly and ſolely His own wiſe contriveance. 2. This purpoſe of God is moſt free and abſolute, there is no cauſe, no reaſon why Hee hath thus diſpoſed all things, and not otherwiſe as Hee might have done, but His own good will and pleaſure If it be ſo in a matter of deepeſt concernment, Rom. 9, 18, It muſt be ſo alſo in all other things; wee may find indeed many inferiour cauſes, many peculiar reaſons for ſuch and ſuch a way of adminiſtration, many ends and uſes for which they ſerve, for there is nothing that His Majeſty hath appointed, but it is for ſome uſe and reaſon, yet we muſt riſe above all theſe, and aſcend into the Tower of His moſt high Will and pleaſure, which is founded on a depth of Wiſedom, and from thence wee ſhal behold all the order, adminiſtration and uſe of the creatures to depend. And herein is a great difference between His Majeſty purpoſes, and ours, you know there is ſtill ſomething preſented under the notion of good and convenient, that moves our will, and inclines us for its own goodneſſe to ſeek after it, and ſo to fall upon the

means

means to compasse it; therefore the end which we propose to our selves hath the influence upon our purposes, and measure them, so that from it the motion seems to proceed first, and not so much from within; but there is no created thing can thus determine His Majesty, Himself, his own glory is the great end which He loves for it self, and for which He loves other things: But among other things, though there be many of them ordained one for anothers use, yet his Will and pleasure is the original of that order, He doth not find it, but makes it, you see all the creatures below are appointed for man, as their immediat and next end, for His use and service, but was it man His goodnesse and perfection which did move, and incline His Majesty to this appoyntment? No indeed, but of His own good will Hee makes such things serve man, that all of them together may be for His own Glory, 3. The Lords Decree is the first rise of all things, that are, or have been, or are to come; this is the first originall of them all, to which they must be reduced as their Spring and Fountain, all of you may understand that there are many things possible, which yet actually will never be; The Lords Power and Omnipotency is of a further extent then His Decree and purpose, His Power is Natural and Essential to His being, His Decree is of choice and voluntar: The Father could have sent a legion of Angels to have delivered his Sonne, the Sonne could have asked them, but none of them would do it, *Mat.* 26. 53. the Lord could have raised up children to Abraham out of stones, but he would not, *Mat.* 3. His power then comprehends within its reach all possible things which do not in their own nature and proper conception, imply a contradiction, so that infinite worlds of creatures more perfect then this, numbers of Angels and men above these, and creatures in glory surpassing them again, are within the compasse of the boundlesse power, and omnipotency of God, but yet for all this it might have fallen out, that nothing should actual-

actually and really have been, unleſſe his Majeſty had of his own free will decreed, what is or hath been, or is to be. His will determins his power, and as it were puts it in the neareſt capacity to act, and exerciſe it ſelf: Here then we muſt look for the firſt beginning of all things that are, they are conceived in the womb of the Lords everlaſting purpoſe. As he ſpeaks *Zeph.* 2. 2. the decree is as it were with childe of beings, *Iſai.* 44. 7. Its Gods royall prerogative to appoint things to come, and none can ſhare with him in it: From whence is it, I pray you, that of ſo many worlds which his power could have framed, this one is brought to light? Is it not becauſe this one was formed (as is were) in the belly of his eternall counſell and will? From whence is it that ſo many men are, and no more? That our Lord Jeſus is ſlain, when the power of God might have keept him alive? Than theſe men, *Judas, &c.* Are the doers of it, when others might have done it? From whence are all theſe actions good or evill under the Sun, which he might have prevented? But from his goodwill and pleaſure, from his *determinate counſell? Act.* 4. 28. Can you finde the originall of theſe in the creature, why thus it is, and why not otherwiſe? Can you conceive why of all the infinite numbers of poſſible beings, theſe are, and no other, and what hath tranſlated that number of creatures which is, from the ſtate of poor poſſibilitie to futurition or actual being, But the deciſive vote of Gods everlaſting purpoſe and counſell? Therefore we would alwayes conceive that the creatures and all their actions, which have or will have any being in the world, have firſt had a being in the womb of Gods Eternal counſell, and that His will and pleaſure hath paſt upon all things that are, and are not, His Counſel has concluded of things that have been, or will be, that thus they ſhall be, and His Counſel has determined of all other things which are alſo poſſible, that they ſhall never come forth into the light of the world, but remain in the dark bowels of Omnipotency,

that

that ſo we may give Him the glory of all things that are or and that are at all. Then 4. we would conſider the extent of his decree, and counſell, its paſt upon all things, its univerſall, reaching every particular being or action of the univerſe. This is the ſtrain of the whole Scripture, he doth not (as ſome dream) once create the creatures in a good ſtate, and put them in capacitie henceforth to preſerve themſelves, or exerciſe their own vertue and power without dependence on him, as an artificer makes an horologe, and orders it in all things, that it may do its buſineſſe without him; He is not only a generall originall of action and motion, as if he would command a river to flow by his appointed channels, as if he did only work, and rule the world by Atturneys and Ambaſſadours, that is the weakneſſe and infirmitie of earthly kings, that they muſt ſubſtitute deputies for themſelves: But this King appoints all immediatly, and diſpoſes upon all the particular actions of his creatures good or evil, and ſo he is the univerſall abſolute Lord of the Creature, of its being and doing, it were a long work to rehearſe what the Scripture ſpeaks of this kinde, but O that ye would read them oftener, and ponder them better, how there is nothing in this world which may ſeem to fall out by chance to you, that you know not how it is come to paſſe, and can ſee no cauſe nor reaſon of it, but it falls out by the holy will of our bleſſed Father, be it of greater or leſſe moment, or be it a haik of thy head fallen, or thy head cut off, the moſt caſuall and contingent thing, though it ſurprized the whole world of men and Angels, that they ſhould wonder from whence it did proceed, it is no ſurpriſall to him, for he not only knew it, but appointed it; the moſt certain and neceſſary thing according to the courſe of nature, it hath no certainety, but from his appointment, who hath eſtabliſhed ſuch a courſe in the creatures, and which he can ſuſpend when he pleaſeth: Be it the ſin of men and devils, which ſeems moſt oppoſite to his Holineſſe, yet even that cannot appear in the world of beings, if it were not in a holy, righ-

teous,

reous, and permiſſive way, firſt conceived in the womb of his eternall Counſell, and if it were not determined by him for holy and juſt ends, *Acts* 4. 28.

The ſecond thing propounded is, that his mind and Counſel is one, one and the ſame, yeſterday, and to day, and for ever; therefore the Apoſtle ſpeaks of God, *that there is no ſhaddow of change or turning in him*, James 1. 17. *He is not a man that he ſhould lie, or the ſon of man that he ſhould repent*: Will he ſay and not do it? *Numb.* 23. 19. And ſhall he decree and not execute it? Shall he purpoſe and not perform it? *I am God and changes not*, that is his Name, *Mal.* 3. 6. the Counſel of the Lord ſhall ſtand, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations, *Pſalm* 33. 11. Men changes their mind oftener then their garments, poor vain man even in his beſt eſtate is changeableneſſe, and viciſſitude it ſelf, altogether vanity; And this ariſeth partly from the imperfection of his underſtanding, and his ignorance, becauſe he does not underſtand what may fall out; there are many things ſecret and hidden, which if he diſcovered, he would not be of that judgement; and many things may fall out, which may give ground of another reſolution; and partly from the weakneſſe and perverſneſſe of his will, that cannot be conſtant in any good thing, and is not ſo cloſely united to it, as that no fear or terrour can ſeparate from it; But there is no ſuch imperfection in him, neither ignorance nor weakneſſe, *all things are naked before him*, all their natures, their circumſtances, all events, all emergents, *known to him are they, and all his works from the beginning*, as perfectly as in the end; And therefore he may come to a fixed reſolution from all eternity, and being reſolved, he can ſee no reaſon of change, becauſe there can nothing appear after, which he did not perfectly diſcover from the beginning: Therefore, when ever ye read in the Scripture, of the Lords repenting, as *Gen.* 6. 7. and *Ier.* 16. 8. ye would remember that the Lord ſpeaks in our terms, and like nurſes with their children, uſes our own dialect, to point out to us our great

ignorance

ignorance of his Majesty, that cannot conceive more honourably of him, nor more distinctly of our selves. When he changeth all things about him, he is not changed, for all these changes were at once in his mind, but when he changeth his outward dispensation, he is said to repent of what he is doing, because we use not to change our manner of dealing, without some conceived grief or repentance, and change of mind. When a man goes to build a house, he hath no mind but that it should continue so, he hath not the least thought of taking it down again, but afterward it becomes ruinous, and his estate enlarges, and then he takes a new resolution to cast it down to the ground, and build a better; Thus it is with man, according as he varies his work, he changes his mind; But it is not so with God, all these changes of his work, all the successions of times, the variation of dealings, the alteration of dispensations in all ages, were at once in his mind, and all before him, so that he never goes to build a house, but he hath in his own mind already determined all the changes it shall be subject to: When he sets up a Throne in a Nation, it is in his mind within such a period to cast it down again: when he lifts up men in successe and prosperity, he doth not again change his mind when he throws them down, for that was in his mind also; so that there is no surpriseall of him by any unexpected emergent: Poor man hath many consultations ere he come to a conclusion; But it is not thus with his Counsell, of all these strange and new things which fall out in our dayes, he hath one thought of them all from eternity, *He is one mind*, and none of all these things have put him off his eternall mind, or put him to a new advisement about his great projects; Not only doth he not change his mind, but his mind and thought is one, of all, and concerning all: Our poor narrow and limited minds, must part their thoughts among many businesses, one thought for this, another for that, and one after another, but with him there is neither succession of counsels and purposes, nor yet pluralky; but

but as with one opening of his eye, he beholds all things as they are, so with one inclination, or nod of his will, he hath given a Law, and appointed all things, if we can at one instant, and one look, see both light and colours, and both the glasse and the shaddow in it, and with one motion of our wills move towards the end, and the means? O how much more may he with one simple undivided act of his good will and pleasure, passe a determination on all things, in their times, and orders, and in his own infinite and glorious being perceive them all with one look? How much consolation might redound from this to believing souls? Hath the Lord appointed you to suffer persecution and tribulation here? Hath he carved out such a lot unto you in this life? Then withall consider that his Majesty hath eternall glory wrapt up in the same Counsell, from which thy afflictions proceed; Hath he made thy soul to melt before him? Hath he convinced thee, and made thee to flee unto the City of refuge, and expect salvation from no other but himself? Then know that life eternall is in the bosome of that same purpose which gave thee to beleeve this, though the one be born before the other, yet the decree shall certainly bring forth the other. And for such souls as upon this vain presumption of the infallibility of Gods purposes, thinks it needlesse to give diligence in Religion, know that it is one mind and purpose that hath linked the end and the means together as a Chain, and therefore if thou expectest to be saved, according to election, thou must according to the same Counsell make thy calling home from sin to God, sure.

Thirdly, What thing soever he hath purposed, he in due time applyes to the performance of it, and then the Counsell of his Will becomes the work of his hands, and there is an admirable harmony and exact agreement between these two: All things come out of the womb of his eternall Decree, by the work of his power, even just fashioned and framed as their lineaments,

and draughts were proportioned in the Decree, nothing failing, nothing wanting, nothing exceeding, there is nothing in the Idea of His mind, but it is expressed in the work of His hands, there is no rawish wishes in God, men have such imperfect desires, I would have or do such a thing if it were not, &c. He wavers not thus in suspense, but what he wills and desires, he wills and desires indeed, He intends it shal be, and what He intends, doubtles He will execute, and bring to passe, therefore His will in due time applyes Almighty power, to fulfill the desire of it, and Almighty power being put to work by His will, it cannot but work all things according to the Counsel of His will, and whatsoever His soul desireth, that Hee cannot but do, even as Hee desires, seeing hee can do it; if he will do it, and can do it, what hinders Him to work and do? know then that His Commands and precepts to you, signifying what is your duty, they do not so much signify what Hee desires or intends to work, or have done, as His approbation of such a thing in it self to be your duty, and therefore though He have revealed His will concerning our duty, though no obedience follow, yet is not His intention frustrated or disappointed, for His Commands to you say not what is his intention about it, but what is that which he approves as good, and a duty obliging men: But whatsoever thing he purposes and intends should be, certainly he will do it, and make it be done: If it be a work of his own power alone, himself will do it alone, if he require the concurrence of creatures to it, as in all the works of providence, then he will effectually apply the creatures to his work, and not wait in suspense on their determination? If he have appointed such an end to be attained by such means? If he have a work to do by such instruments, then without all doubt he will apply the instruments when his time comes, and will not wait on their concurrence? You see now strange things done, you wonder at them, how we are brought down from our excellencie? How our land is laid desolate by strangers?

ſtrangers? How many inſtruments of the Lords work are laid aſide? How he lifts up a rod of indignations againſt us, and is like to overturn even the foundations of our land? All theſe were not in our minde before, but they were in his minde from Eternity, and therefore he is now working it: Beleeve then that there is not a circumſtance of all this buſineſſe, not one point or jot of it, but is even as it was framed, and carved out of old, his preſent works are according to an ancient pattern, which he carries in his minde, all the meaſures and degrees of your affliction, all the ounces and grain-weights of your cup, were all weighed in the ſcales of his Eternall counſel, the inſtruments, the time, the manner, all that is in it. If he change inſtruments, that was in his minde, if he change diſpenſations, that was in his minde alſo; And ſeeing ye know by the Scriptures that a bleſſed end is appointed for the godly, that all things work for their good, that all is ſubſervient to the Churches welfare, ſeeing I ſay, you know his purpoſe is ſuch as the Scriptures ſpeaks, then beleeve his performance ſhal be exact accordingly, nothing deficient, no joint, no ſinew, in all his work of providence, no line in all this book, and volume of the creature, but it was written in that ancient Book of his Eternall counſel, and firſt faſhioned in that, *Pſal.* 139. 16.

Then laſtly, His will is irreſiſtible, his counſel ſtands, who can turn him from his purpoſe, and who can hinder him from performance, therefore he attains his end, in the higheſt and moſt ſuperlative degree of certainty and infallibility; Himſelf will not change his own purpoſe, for why ſhould he do it, if he change to the better, then it reflects on his wiſdome, if he change to the worſe, it reflects both on his wiſdome and goodneſſe, certainly he can ſee no cauſe why he ſhould change it; But as himſelf cannot change, ſo none can hinder his performance, for what power, think you, ſhal it be, that may attempt that? Is it the power of men, of ſtrong men, of high men, of any men? No ſure, for their breath is in their noſtrils, they have no power but as He breaths in them,

If he keep in his breath, (as it were) they periſh, all nations are as nothing before him, and what power has nothing? Is it devils may do it? No, for they cannot though they would, he chaines them, he limits them: Is it good Angels? They are powerfull indeed, but they neither can nor will reſiſt his will. Let it be the whole univerſitie of the Creation, ſuppoſe all their ſcattered force and vertue conjoined in one, yet it is all but finite, it amounts to no more, if you would eternally adde unto it; But all victory and reſiſtance of this kinde, muſt be by a ſuperior power, or at leaſt by an equall; Therefore we may conclude, that there is no impediment or let can be put in his way, nothing can obſtruct his purpoſe, if all the world ſhould conſpire as on man to obſtruct the performance of any of his promiſes and purpoſes, they can but rage in vain, like dogs barking at the Moon, they ſhall be ſo farre from attaining their purpoſe, that his Majeſtie ſhal diſabuſe them (ſo to ſpeak) to his own purpoſe, he ſhal apply them quite contrary to their own minde, to work out the counſell of his minde: Here is the abſolute King only worth the name of a King, and Lord whom all things in Heaven and Earth obeyes at the firſt nod and beckening to them. Hills, Seas, Mountains, Rivers, Sun and Moon, and Clouds, men and beaſts, Angels and devils, all of them are acted, moved, and inclined according to his pleaſure, all of them are about his work indeed, as the reſult of all in the end ſhall make it appear, and are ſervants at his Command, going where he bids go, and comming where he bids come, led by an inviſible hand, though in the mean time they know it not, but thinks they are about their own buſineſſe, applauds themſelves for a time in it, *ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt*, godly men who knows his will and loves it, are led by it willingly, for they yeeld themſelves up to his diſpoſall, but wicked men who have contrare wills of their own, they can gain no more by reſiſting, but to be drawn alongs with it.

Now

Now to what purpose is all this spoken of Gods De-
es and purposes, which he hath called a secreet belong-
to himself? If his works and judgements be a great
pth, and unsearchable, sure his decrees are farre more
searchable? For it is the secret and hidden purpose
God, which is the very deepth of his way and judge-
ent. But to what purpose is it all, I say? Not to en-
ire curiously into the particulars of them, but to pro-
e by them: the Scripture holds out to us the un-
ngeableneſſe, freedom, extent, holineſſe and wiſe-
m of them, for our advantage, and if this advantage be
t reaped we know them in vain. Not to burden your
emorie with many particulars, we would labour to draw
th both instruction and consolation out of them. In-
uction, I say, in two things especially, to submit with
verence and respect to his Majestie in all his works and
yes, and to trust in him who knows all his works, and
ll not change his minde.

There is nothing, wherein I know Christians more
ficient then in this point of submission, which I take
be one of the chiefest and sweeteſt, though hardeſt du-
es of a Christians. It is hardly to be found among
en, a through complyance of the soul to what his soul
ſires, a real subjection of our spirits to His good will
nd pleasure: There is nothing so much blessed in
cripture, as waiting on him, as yeelding to him to be
ſpoſed upon, *Bleſſed are all they that wait on him*: pride
s his greateſt oppoſite, and he oppoſes himself most to
hat, for it is in its own nature most derogatory to the
ghneſſe and Majeſty of God, which is his very glo-
y; Therefore submission is most acceptable to him,
hen the soul yeelds it self and its will to him, He
condeſcends far more to it, hee cannot be an enemy
o such a soul; submission to His Majesties pleasure, is
he very bowing down of the Soul willingly, to any thing
He does or commands; what ever yoke Hee put on, of
duty, or suffering, to take it on willingly, without answer-

ing again, which is the great ſin condemned in
vants; to put the mouth in the duſt, and to keep ſile
becauſe He doeth it, *I was dumb with ſilence, I open*
my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it, here is ſubmiſſion
deed, ſilence of mind and mouth, a reſtraint put u
the ſpirit to think nothing grudgingly of Him, for
thing He doth: It is certainly the greateſt faule of C
ſtians, and ground of many more, that ye do not loo
God, but to creatures in any thing befals you, th
fore there are ſo frequent riſings of ſpirit againſt His y
frequent ſpurnings againſt it, as *Ephraim* unaccuſto
with the yoke, ſo do yee, and this is it only makes it he
and troubleſome, if there were no more reaſon for it,
your own gain, it is the only way to peace and quie
Durum ſed levius fit patientiâ, quicquid corrigere eſt n
your impatience cannot help you, but hurt you, it is
very yoke of your yoke; but quiet and ſilent ſtoop
makes it eaſie in it ſelf, and brings in more help be
even Divine help: Learn this I beſeech you, to get y
own wills abandoned and your ſpirits ſubdued to G
both in the point of duty and diſpenſation, *If du*
commanded croſſe thy ſpirit? as certainly the reality
exerciſe of godlines muſt be unpleaſant to any Natu
know what thou are called to, to quite thy own wil
Him, to give up thy ſelf to his pleaſure ſinglely, with
ſo much reſpect to thy own pleaſure or gain, learn to o
Him ſimply becauſe He commands, though no profi
redound to thee, and by this means thou ſhalt in d
time have more ſweet peace and real gain, though th
intended is not: And incaſe any diſpenſation cro
thy mind, let not thy mind riſe up againſt it, do not ſ
out with providence, but commit thy way wholly to Hi
and let Him do what He pleaſes in that, be thou minding
thy duty, be not anxious in that, but be diligent in th
and thou ſhal be the only gainer by it, beſides the hono
redounds to Him.

Then I would exhort you from this ground to truſt in

him, seeing Hee alone is the absolute Soveraign Lord, of all things, seeing Hee has past a determination upon all things, and accordingly they must be, and seeing none can turn him from his way, O then Christians learn to commit your selves to Him in all things, both for this life and the life to come, why are yee so vain and foolish, as to depend and hang upon poor vain depending creatures? why do ye not forsake your selves? Why do ye not forsake all other things as empty shaddows? are not all created powers, habits, gifts, graces, strength, riches, &c. like the idols in comparison of him, who can neither do good, neither can they do ill? *Cursed is he that trusts in man*, Jer. 17. 15. 6. there needs no other curse then the very disappointment you shal meet with. Consider I beseech you that our God can do al things, what ever hee pleases in Heaven and Earth, and that none can obstruct his pleasure, blest is that soul for whom the Counsel of his will is ingaged, and it is ingaged for all that trust in Him, He can accomplish his good pleasure in thy behalf, either without, or against means, all impediments and thorns set in his way; He can burn them up; you who are heirs of the promises, O know your privilledge, what his soul desireth, He doth even that, and what Hee hath sctionsly promised to you, he desires. If you ask who are heirs of the Promises, I would answer simple, these and these only who do own them, and challenge them, and clame to them for their life and salvation, these who seek the Inheritance only by the promise, and whose soul desires them and imbraces them. O if you would observe how unlike ye are God, yee change often, return often out of the way, but that were not so ill, if ye did not imagine Him to be like your selves, and it is unbeliet which makes Him like to your selves when your frame and tender disposition changes, when presence and accesse to God is removed; that is wrong. It speaks out a mortal creature indeed, but if it be so, O do no more wrong, do not by your suspisions and

jealou-

Jealousies and questionings of him imagine that he is l
unto you, and changed also, that is a double wr
and dishonour to His Majesty. Hath Hee not sa
am God and changes not: He is in one mind, who can turn h
How comes it then that ye doubt of his love as oft as
change? When ye are in a good temper, ye think
loves you, when it is not so ye cannot believe but h
angry and hates you; is not this to speak quite contr
to the Word, that he is a God that changes, that he
not in one mind, but now in one, and then in anot
as oft as the unconstant wind of a souls self-pleasing
mor turns about. Here is your rest and confidence,
you will be establisshed, not within your selves, not u
marks and signs within you, which ebbe and flow as
Sea, and change as the Moon, but upon his unchangea
nature and faithfull promises. This we deire to be
our to you all, as one ground for all, you would ev
one have some particular ground in your own disposit
and condition, and thinks it generall Doctrine only wh
layeth it not home so, but believe it, I know no grou
of reall soul-establishment but generall truths, and pri
ciples common to you all, and our businesse is not to l
any other foundation, or moe foundations, according
your different conditions, but to lay this one Foundat
Christ, and God unchangeable, and to exhort every o
of you to make that generall Foundation your own in pa
ticular, by leaning to it, and building upon it, a
claiming to it, all other are sandy and ruinous.

Let us now in this sad time presse consolation fro
this, the Lords hand is in all this, its immediat in ev
dispensation, and its only carnal-mindednesse that ca
not see him stretching out his hand to every man, wi
his own portion of affliction: Know this one thing
that God is *in one mind*, for all these many wayes an
judgements, he is in one mind, to gather the Saints,
build up the Church the Body of Christ, this is his en
all other businesses is in the by, and subservient to thi

therefore

erefore he will change it as he pleaſes, but his great pur-
ſe of good to his people, all the world cannot hinder.
et us then eſtabliſh our ſouls in this conſideration, all is
ear above, albeit cloudy below, all is calm in Heaven,
beit tempeſtuous here upon earth: There is no confu-
on, no diſorder in his mind, though we think the world
of courſe, and that all things reel about with confuſion,
e hath one mind in it, and who can turn him? And
at mind is good to them that truſt in him; And there-
re who can turn away our good? Let men conſult
d imagine what they pleaſe, let them paſſe votes and
ecrees what to do with his people, yet it is all to no pur-
oſe, for there is a Counſel above, an older Counſel,
hich muſt ſtand and take place in all generations: If
ens concluſions be not according the Counſel of his
ill they are but imaginary dreams, like the fancies of a
iſtracted perſon, who imagining himſelf a King, ſits
own on the Throne, and gives out Decrees and Ordi-
ances. May not he who ſits in Heaven laugh at the
olliſhneſſe and madneſſe of men, who act in all things as
they had no dependence on him, and go about their
uſineſſe, as if it were not contrived already, it is a ridi-
ulous thing for men to order their buſineſſe, and ſtrike
heir own concluſions, without once minding one above
hem, who hath not only a negative, but an affirmative
ote in all things? It's true, that God in his deep wiſe-
om, hath kept up his particular purpoſes ſecret, that men
ay walk according to an appointed rule, and uſe all
eans for compaſſing their intended ends, and therefore
is well ſaid, *Prudens futuri temporis exitum caliginoſa nocte*
remit Deus, but yet withall we ſhould mind that of *James*,
If the Lord will, and go about all things, even the moſt
robable, with ſubmiſſion to his will and pleaſure; And
herefore when men go without their bounds, either in fear
f dangers, or joy conceived in ſucceſſes, *Ridenque ſi mortua*
ultra fas trepidet, &c. Exceſſe of fear, exceſſe of
hope,

hope, exceſſe of joy in theſe outwards things, is, as it were ridiculous to him, who hath all theſe things appointed with him. To him be praiſe and glory.

EPH. 1. 11. *In whom alſo we have obtained an inheritance being predeſtinated,* &c.

ROM. 9. 22, 23. *What if God willing to ſhew his wrath, and to make his power known,* &c.

IN the Creation of the World, it pleaſed the Lord after all things were framed and diſpoſed, to make one creature to rule over all, and to him he gave the moſt excellent nature, and priviledges beyond the reſt, ſo that it may appear that he had made all things for man, and man immediatly for his own glory: As man was the chief of the works of his hands ſo we may according to the Scriptures conceive that he was chiefly minded in the counſels of his heart, and that as in the execution of his purpoſe in creating the World, man had the preheminence aſſigned unto him, and all ſeemed ſubordinate unto him; ſo in the Lords purpoſes concerning the World, his purpoſe about man hes the preheminence. He indeed hes reſolved to declare the glory of his Name in this World; therefore the Heavens and Firmament are made Preachers of that Glory, *Pſalm* 19. 1, 2, &c. But in a ſpeciall manner, his Majeſties glorious Name is manifeſted in man, and about man, he hath ſet man as it were in the Center or midſt of the Creation, that all the creatures might direct or bring in their praiſes unto him, to be offered up in his and their name to the Lord their Maker by him, as the common mouth of the world, and the Lord hath choſen this creature above all the creatures, for the more ſolemn and glorious declaration of himſelf, in his ſpeciall properties; therefore we would

would gather our thoughts in this buſineſſe, to hear from the Lord what his thoughts are towards us, for certainly the right underſtanding of his everlaſting Counſel touching the eternall ſtate of men, is of ſingular vertue to conform us to the praiſe of his Name, and eſtabliſh us in faith and confidence: Predeſtination is a myſtery indeed, into which we would not curiouſly and boldly inquire, beyond what is revealed, for then a ſoul muſt needs loſſe it ſelf in that depth of wiſdome, and periſh in the ſearch of unſearchableneſſe; And thus the Word ſpeaks in Scripture of this ſubject, intimating to us that it is rather to be admired then conceived, and that there ought to be ſome ignorance of theſe ſecrets, which conjoyned with faith and reverence, is more learned then any curious knowledge: But withall we muſt open our eyes upon ſo much light as God reveals of theſe ſecrets, knowing that the light of the Word is a ſaving refreſhing light, not confounding, as is his inacceſſible light of ſecret glory. As far as it pleaſes his Majeſty to open his mouth, let us not cloſe our ears, but open them alſo to his inſtruction, knowing that as he will withhold no neceſſary thing for our ſalvation, ſo he will reveal nothing but what is profitable. This is the beſt bond of ſobriety and humble wiſdome, to learn what he teacheth us, but when he makes an end of teaching, to deſire no more learning: Its humility to ſeek no more, and it is true wiſdome to be content with no leſſe.

There is much weakneſſe in our conceiving of divine things, we ſhape and form them in our minds, according to a mould of our own experience, or invention, and cannot conceive of them as they are in themſelves: If we ſhould ſpeak properly, there are not counſels and purpoſes in God, but one intire counſel and reſolution concerning all things which are in time, by which he hath diſpoſed all in their ſeverall times, ſeaſons, conditions, and orders; but becauſe we have many thoughts, about many things, ſo we cannot well conceive of God, but in

likeneſſe

likeneſſe to our ſelves; And therefore the Scriptures co-
deſcending to our weakneſſe, ſpeaks ſo. *How many are the*
precious thoughts towards me, ſaith *David*, and yet inde-
there is but one thought of him, and us, and all, whic
one thought is of ſo much vertue, that it is equivalent to a
infinite number of thoughts, concerning infinite object
The Lord hath from everlaſting conceived one purpoſe o
manifeſting his own glory in ſuch ſeverall wayes; An
this is the head ſpring of all that befalls creatures, me
and Angels; But becauſe in the execution of this pur-
poſe, there is a certain order, and ſucceſſion, and varie-
ty, therefore men do ordinarily fancy ſuch or ſuch a
frame and order in the Lords mind and purpoſe; and a
the Aſtronomers do cut and carve in their imaginatio
Cycles, Orbs, and Epicycles in the Heavens, becauſe o
the various and different appearances and motions o
Stars in them, whereas it may be really, there is but on
Cœleſtiall Body, in which all theſe various lights and mo-
tions do appear, ſo do men fancy unto themſelves an or-
der of the Lords decrees, according to the *Phœnomena*, o
appearances of his works in the world, whereas it is one
purpoſe and decree, which in its infinite compaſſe com-
prehends all theſe varieties and orders together: This
much we may indeed lawfully conceive of his decree, that
there is an exact correſpondence and ſuitableneſſe between
his Majeſties purpoſe and execution, and that he is a wiſe
Lord, *wonderfull in counſell, and excellent in working*, hav-
ing ſome great plot and deſign before his eyes, which he
intends to effect, and which is as it were the great light
and Sun of this Firmament, unto which by that ſame
wonderfull Counſel all other things are ſubordinate;
And ſo in the working, it ſhall appear exactly as his
Counſel did delineate and contrive it.

There is no man ſo empty or ſhallow but he hath ſome
great deſign and purpoſe which he chiefly aimes at; ſhall
we not then conceive that the Lord who inſtructs every
man to this diſcretion, and teaches him, *Iſai.* 28. 26. is
himſelf

himself wise in his Counsel, and hath some grand project before him in all this fabrick of the world, and the upholding of it since it was made? Certainly he hath, and if you ask what it is? The wise man will teach you in general, *He made all things for himself, even the wicked for the evil day*, Prov. 16. 4. Here then is his great design and purpose to glorifie himself, to manifest his own Name to men and Angels. Now his Name comprehends Wisedom, Goodnesse, Power, Mercy, and Justice; the first three he declares in all the works of his hands, all are well done, and wisely done, the excellency of the work shews the wonderfull Counsellour, and the wise Contriver; the goodnesse of any creature in its kind, declares the inexhausted spring of a self-being from whom it proceeds, and the bringing all these out of nothing, and upholding them, is a glorious declaration of his power: But yet in all the works of his hands, there is nothing found to manifest his glorious mercy, and justice, upon which are the flower and garland of his Attributes, and unto which wisdome and power seems to be subservient; Therefore his Majesty in that one intire purpose of his own Glory, resolves to manifest his wrath, and his mercy, upon men and Angels, subjects capable of it; which two Attributes are as the Poles about which all the Wheels of Election and Reprobation turns, as you see in the place read, *Rom.* 9. 22, 23. Let this then be established as the end of all his works, as it is designed in his Counsel, and nothing else. It is not the creature, nor any thing in the creature, which is first in his mind, but himself, and therefore, *of him, and for him are all things*; Here they have their rise, and thither they return, even to the Ocean of Gods eternalll glory, from whence all did spring.

The right establishing of this will help us to conceive aright of His Counsel of Predestination: It is a common cavil of carnal reason, how can the Lord reject so many persons, and fore-ordain them to destruction?

It

It seems most contrary to His goodnesse and wisedom to have such an end of eternal Predestination before Him, in the creating of so many thousands, to make them for nothing but to damne them? Here carnal reason which is *enimity to God*, triumphs; But consider I say that this is not the Lords end and chief design to destroy men even as it is not His Majesties first look or furthest reach to give unto others Eternal life, so it is not His principall intent to sink them into eternal death as if that were His pleasure and delight, no indeed, neither is the creatures happines nor its misery that which first moves him, or is most desired of Him, but himself only, and Hee cannot move out of himself to any businesse, but Hee must return it unto himself, therefor the wise preacher expresses it well, *He made all for himself, even the wicked for the day of evil*. It was not his great end of creating wicked men to damne them, or creating righteous men to save them, but both are for a further and higher end, for Himself and His own Glory.

All seem to agree about this, that the great end of all the Lords Counsels and Decrees, is His own glory, to be manifested on man and Angels. and that this must be first in his mind, not that there is first or last with Him, but to speak after the manner of men, if He had many thoughts as we have, this would be His first thought, and in this one purpose this end is chiefly aimed at, and all other things are by the Lords Counsel subordinat to this as means to compasse that. But as concerning the order of these means, and consequently of His Majesties purpose about them, men by examining His Majesty according to the creatures rules, or according to sense, bring him down far below his own infinite greatnesse: Some conceive, that that was first as it were in His mind, which is first done, looking upon the execution of his purpose in the works of His power, they imagine that as Hee first created man righteous, so this was his first thought concerning man, to creat man for the glory of his goodnesse and

d power, without any particular determination as yet of
is ends; and I conceive this is the thought of the mul-
tude, of people, they think God was disappointed in His
ork, when they hear He created such a glorious creature
at is now become so miserable, they cannot believe that
His Majesty had all this sin and misery determined with
Him when He purposed to creat him, but look upon the
mergent of mans fall into sin and misery, as a surprisall
f His Majesty, as if He had meaned another thing in cre-
ting Him, and so was upon this occasion of mans sinne
riven to a new consultation about the helping of the busi-
esse and making the best out of it that might be. Thus
hrough wisedom the World knowes not God, they
hink God altogether like themselves, and so liken him to
he builder of an house, who set nothing before him in do-
ng so, but to build it after that manner for his own ends,
ut then being surprized with the fall and ruine of it, takes
new advisement and builds it up again upon another
uter foundation; But because they cannot say that God
akes any new advisements in time, but must confesse that
ll His Counsels are everlasting concerning all the
works of His hands; Therefore they bring in fore-know-
edge to smooth their irreligious conceit of God, as if
he Lord upon his purpose of creating man had fore-
een what should befall him, and so purposed to per-
mit it to be so, that out of it he might erect some glo-
ious fabrick of mercy and justice upon the ruins of
man; And that little or nothing may be left to the
absolute Soveraigne will of God, to which the Scripture
ascribes all things, they must again imagine that upon
his purpose of sending Christ to save sinners, he is yet
undetermined about the particular end, of particular
men, but watches on the tower of fore-knowledge, to
espie what they will do, whether men will beleeve in
His Son or not, whether they will persevere in faith or
not, and according to his observation of their doings, so
he applies his own will to carve out their reward, or

portion

portion of life or death. These are even the thoughts which are imbred in your breasts by nature, that which the learned call Arminianisme is nothing else but the carnall reason of mens hearts which is enimkie to God, it is that very Disputation which *Paul* in this Chap. exclaimes against, *Who art thou O man that disputs.*

But certainly all this contrivance, is nothing beseeming the wisedom or Soveraignty of God, but reflects upon both; upon his wisedom, that he should have thought of creating the most noble of his creatures, and yet be in suspense about the end of the creature, and have that in uncertainty what way his glory shal indeed be manifested by it. Is it not the first and chief thought of every wise man, what he intends and aims at in his work, and according to the measure and reach of his wisedom so he reaches further in his end and purpose: Shal we then conceive the only wise God, so farre to have mistaken himself, as to do that which no wise man would do. He who is of such an Infinite reach of wisedom and understanding, to fall upon the thoughts of making such an excellent creature, and yet to ly in suspense within himself, about the eternall estate of it, and to be in a waiting posture what way his Glory should be manifested by it, whether in a way of simple goodnesse only, or in a way of justice, or in a way of mercy, till he should foresee off the tower of fore-knowledge, how that creature should behave it self. Our Text speaks not thus: For in the place, *Eph.* 1. We have the Lord in His Eternall purpose carving out such and such particular persons an inheritance, and Adoption of children, for that great end of the glory of his grace, vers. 11. and 5, 6. And predestination falls out, not according to our carriage, but according to the purpose of him who *works all things* that he works, *after the counsell of his own will*, without consulting our will, and if you enquire what are these *all things*, certainly we must take it simply for *all things* that are at all, or have

any

y reall being, his power, his hand muſt be in it, and
t according to his own counſel, without reſpect had to
e creatures will, according to his own good pleaſure,
ſ. 5. 11. He had no ſooner a thought of working and
king man, but this purpoſe was in it, to make ſuch
n to the praiſe of his glorious grace, and to fore-ordain
m to an inheritance, and others to make or fit them
deſtruction, as the Text, *Rom.* 9. *verſ.* 22, bears.
rein the great and unſearchable wiſdom of God appears
be a great deepth, that when he hath a though of make-
ſuch a veſſell, he hath this purpoſe in the boſome of
what uſe it ſhal be for, whether for honour or diſho-
ur, and accordingly in his counſel he prepares it
her to glory or deſtruction, and in time makes it fit for
uſe, either by ſin or grace: Here is the deepth that
nnot be ſounded by mortall men, *O the deepth of the*
hes both of his wiſedom and knowledge, how unſearchable
his judgements, and his wayes paſt finding out? The
ole tenor of the Scriptures ſhew that his Majeſty was
t ſurprized, and taken at unawars by *Adams* fall, but
at it fell out according to the determined counſel of
s will, if he knew it, and ſuffered it to be, certainly he
rmitted it, becauſe he willed it ſhould be ſo; And why
ay he not determine that in his holy counſel which his
iſdome can diſabuſe to the moſt glorious end that can be?
by may not he decree ſuch a fall, who out of of mans ruines
h erect ſuch a glorious Throne for his grace and juſtice
triumph into? It is more for the glory of his infinit
iſedom, to bring good, and ſuch a good out of evil, then
nly to permit that good ſhould be.

Then ſuch Doctrine is repugnant to the Lords abſolute
ower and ſoveraignity, which is *Pauls* Sanctuary whe-
er he flees unto as a ſure refuge, from the ſtroake or
lak of carnall reaſon. *Hath not the Potter power over*
e clay, to make of the ſame lump, one veſſell to honour,
nother to diſhonour, verſ. 21. Hath not the Lord more
bſolute dominion over us, then the Potter hath over the

clay, for the potter made not the clay, but the Lo
hath made us of nothing, ſo that ſimply and abſolutely
we are his, and not our own, and ſo he hath an abſolu
right to make any uſe of us he pleaſes, without conſulti
our wills and deſervings. Can any man quarrel him f
preparing him to deſtruction, ſeeing he owes nothing
any man, but may do with his own what he pleaſes? Wha
God, willing to make known his power, and juſtice, a
wrath, have fitted and prepared ſome veſſels for deſtru
ction, with which, in time he bears much, and forbea
long, uſing much patience towards them? Can any m
challenge him for it? *verſ.* 22. And what if God willing
make known the riches of his grace, have prepared ſom
veſſels to glory, ſhal any mans eye be evil becauſe he
good? *verſ.* 23. Shal man be left to be his own diſpo
ſer, and the ſhaper of his own fortune? Sure it was not
with *Eſau* and *Jacob*, they were alike in the womb,
their was any prerogative, *Eſau* the eldeſt had it, they ha
done neither good nor evil, what difference was then be
tween them, to caſt the ballance of his will? Can yo
imagine any? Indeed carnall reaſon will ſay, that Go
fore-knew what they would do, and ſo he chooſed or re
jected, But, why doth not the Apoſtle anſwer thus unto
that objection of unrighteouſneſſe in God? *verſ.* 14.
had been ready and plain, but rather he oppoſes the wi
and calling of God, to all works paſt, or to come, he giv
no anſwer but this, *he will have mercy becauſe he will have*
mercy, that is the ſupream rule of righteouſneſſe, and
hitherto muſt we flee, as the ſureſt Anchor of our hope
and ſtability, our Salvation depends not on our willing
or running, on our reſolving or doing, but upon the
primitive good pleaſure and will of God, on which hang
our willing, and running, and obtaining. It is certainly
an unorderly order, to flee unto that in men, for the
cauſe of Gods Eternall counſels, which only flows from
his Eternall counſel, *Eph.* 1. 4. Hath he choſen us be-
cauſe he did fore-know that we would be holy, and with-
out

ut blame, as men think, or hath he not rather choſen
s to be holy and without blame; He cannot behold
y good or evil in the creature, till His will paſſe
ſentence upon it, for from whence ſhould it
ome?

Seeing then this order and contrivance of Gods pur-
oſe is but fained, it ſeems to ſome that the very con-
rare Method were more ſutable, even to the rules of
iſedom: You know what is firſt in mens intention, is
aſt in execution, the end is firſt in their minde, then the
eans to compaſſe that end, but in practice again, men
all firſt upon the means and by them come at length to
ttain their end, therefore theſe who would have that
rſt as it were in Gods minde, which he doth firſt, do
ven croſſe common rules of reaſon in humane affaires:
t would ſeem then (ſay ſome) that this Method might
o well, that what is laſt in his execution, was firſt in
is purpoſe, and by him intended as the end of what he
oth firſt, and ſo ſome do rank his decrees; that he had
irſt a thought of glorifying men, and to attain this end
e purpoſed to give him grace, and for this purpoſe to ſuf-
er him to fall, and for all to create him: But we muſt not
ook thus upon it either, it were a fooliſh and ridiculos coun-
il unbeſeeming the poor wiſedom of man, to purpoſe the
lorifying of man whom he had not yet determined to
reate, therefore we would alwayes have in our minde, that
he great end and project of all is the glory of his mercy
nd juſtice upon men, and this we may conceive is firſt
n order, neither mens life nor death, but Gods glory
o be manifeſted upon men: Now to attain this glo-
rious end, with one inclination or determination of his
will, not to be diſtinguiſhed or ſevered, he condeſcends
upon all that is done in time, as one compleat and intire
mean of glorifying himſelf, ſo that one of them is not be-
fore another in his minde, but altogether: for attaining
this he purpoſes to create man, he ordains the fall of all

men into a ſtate of ſin and miſery, and ſome of theſe upon whom he had reſolved to ſhew his mercy, he gives them to Chriſt to be redeemed, and reſtored by grace: Others he fore-ordains them to deſtruction, and all this at once, without any ſuch order as we imagine: Now though he intend all this at once and together, yet it doth not hence follow that all theſe muſt be executed together, as when a man intends to build a houſe for his own accommodation, there are many things in the houſe upon which he hath not ſeverall purpoſes, but yet they muſt be ſeverally, and in ſome order done; First the foundation laid, then the walls raiſed, then the roof put on, yet he did not intend the foundation to be for the walls, or the walls for the roof, but altogether for himſelf; Even ſo the Lord purpoſes to glorify his mercy and juſtice upon a certain number of perſons, and for this end to give them a being, to govern their falling into miſery, to raiſe ſome out of it by a Mediator, and to leave ſome into it to deſtruction, and all this as one intire mean to illuſtrate his glorious mercy and juſtice; but theſe things themſelves muſt be done not all at once, but one before another, either as their own nature requires, or as he pleaſes, the very nature of the thing requires that man be created before he ſin, that he ſin and fall before a Mediator ſuffer for his ſin, and that he have a being, before he have a glorious being, and that he have a ſinfull and miſerable being, before he have this glorious and gracious being, which may manifeſt the grace and mercy of God: But it is the pleaſure of the Lord that determines in what time and order Chriſt ſhal ſuffer, either before or after the converſion of ſinners, or whether ſinners ſhal be preſently inſtated in glory and perfectly delivered from all ſin at their firſt converſion, or onely in part during this life.

Seeing then this was his Majeſties purpoſe to make ſo many veſſels of honour, upon whom he might glorify the riches of his grace, and mercy; And ſo many veſſels
of

of wrath, upon whom he might shew the power of his anger? You may think what needed all this business of mans Redemption, might not God have either preserved so many as he had appointed to glory from falling into sin and misery, or at least have freely pardoned their sin without any satisfaction, and out of the exceeding riches of his mercy and power, have as well not imputed sin to them at all, as imputed their sins to Christ, who was not guilty? What needed his giving so many to the Son and the Sons receiving them? What needed these mysteries of Incarnation, of Redemption, seeing he might have done all this simply without so much pains and expence, why did he choose this way? Indeed that is the wonder, and if there were no more end for it, but to confound mortality that dar ask him what he doth, it is enough; should he be called down to the Bar of humane reason, to give an account of his matters? *Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or being his counsellour hath taught him?* That is in the depths of his unsearchable understanding, that he choosed to go this round, and to compasse his end by such a strange circuit of means, when he might have done it simply and directly, without so much pains; yet it is not so hidden, but he hath revealed as much as may satisfie or silence all flesh: For we must consider that his great project is not simply to manifest the glory of his goodnesse, but of his gracious and mercifull goodnesse, the most tender and excellent of all; and therefore man must be miserable, sinfull, and vile, that the riches of his grace may appear in choosing and saving such persons, but that it may appear also how excellent he could make man, and how vain all created perfections are, being left to themselves, therefore he first made man righteous, and being fallen into sin and misery, he might straight way have restored him without more, but his purpose was to give an exact demonstration of mercy, tempered and mixed with justice, and therefore he findes out the satisfaction in his eternall Counsel, *I have found*

a ransome, and so he chooses Jesus Christ to be the Hea of these chosen souls, in whom they might be again rest red unto eternall life, and these souls, he, in his everlastin purpose gives over to the Son to be redeemed, and the the Son receives: And thus the glory of Mercy and Ju stice shines most brightly, yea, more brightly, then h he had at first pardoned. O how doth his love and me cy appear, that he will transferre our sins upon his Ho Son, and accept that redemption for us, and his Justice that a redemption and price he must have, even from hi Son, when once he comes in the stead of sinners; An in this point do the Songs of Eternity concenter.

ROM. 9. 22. *and* EPH. 1. 11.

WEE are now upon a high subject, high in deed for an eminent Apostle, much more above our reach, the very consideration of Gods infinite wisdome, might alone suffice to restrain our unlimited thoughts, and serve to sober our minds, with the challenge of our own ignorance and darknesse, yet the vain and wicked mind of man will needs quarrel with God, and enter the lists of disputation with him, about his righteousnesse and wisdome, in the Counsel of Election and Reprobation: *But who art thou O man that replieſt against God, or disputes?* ver. 20. This is a thing not to be disputed, but believed, and if ye will believe no more then ye can comprehend by sense or reason, then ye give his Majesty no more credit then weak morrall man; What ever secret thoughts do rise up in thy heart when thou hears of Gods fore-ordaining men to eternall life, without previous foresight or consideration of their doings, and preparing men to eternall wrath, for the praise of His Justice, without previous consideration of their deservings, and passing a definitive sentence upon

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he end of all men, before they do either good or evil? When ever any secret surmizes rises in thy heart against his, learn to answer thus, enter not the lists of disputation with corrupt reason, but put in this bridle of the fear of Gods greatnesse, and the conscience of thy own basenesse, and labour to restrain thy undantoned and wild mind by it; Ponder that well, who thou art who disputes, who God is, against whom thou disputes, and if thou have spoken once, thou will speak no more, what thou art who is a clay formed out of nothing, what he is who is the former, and hath not the Potter power over the clay? Consider but how great wickednesse it is, so much as to question him, or ask an account of his matters, after you have found his will to be the cause of all things, then to enquire further into a cause of his will which is alone the self-rule of righteousnesse, it is to seek something above his will, and to reduce his Majesty into the order of creatures, it is the most abominable usurpation and sacriledge, for both it robs him of his royall prerogative, and instates the base foot-stool into his Throne: But know, that certainly God will overcome when he is judged, *Psalm* 51.6. If thou judge him, he will condemn thee, if thou oppugn his absolute and holy Decrees, he will hold thee fast bound by them to thy condemnation, he needs no other defence, but to call out thy own conscience against thee, and bind thee over to destruction, therefore, as one saith well, *Let the rashnesse of men be restrained from seeking that which is not, lest peradventure they find that which is*; Seek not a reason of his purposes, lest peradventure thou find thy own death and damnation infolded in them.

Paul mentions two objections of carnall and fleshly wisedom against this Doctrine of Election and Reprobation, which indeed contain the summe of all that is vented and invented even to this day, to defile the spotlesse truth of God: All the whisperings of men tend to one of two, either to justifie themselves, or to accuse God of unrighteousnesse;

teousneſſe; And ſhall any do it and be guiltleſſe. confeſſe ſome oppoſe this Doctrine not ſo much out of intention of accuſing God, as out of a prepoſterous ignorant zeal for God, even as *Iobs* friends did ſpe much for God, nay, but it was not well ſpoken, th did but ſpeak wickedly for him: Some ſpeak much the defence of his righteouſneſſe and holineſſe, and und pretence of that plea, make it inconſiſtent with theſe, foreordain to life or death, without the foreſight of th carriage; But ſhall they ſpeak wickedly for God, or he accept their perſon? He who looks into the ſecrets the heart, knows the riſe and bottom of ſuch defences, a apologies for his Holineſſe, to be partly ſelf-love, pa narrow and limited thoughts of him, drawing him do to the determinations of his own greateſt enemy carn reaſon. Since men will aſcribe him no righteouſneſſe, b ſuch a one of their own ſhaping, conformed to their ow modell, do they not indeed rob him of his Holineſſe a Righteouſneſſe?

I find two or three objections which may be reduced t this Head. Firſt, it ſeems unrighteouſneſſe with God to predeſtinate men to eternall death, without their ow evill deſerving, or any fore-thought of it, that before an man had a being, God ſhould have been in his Counſe fitting ſo many to deſtruction? Is it not a ſtrange mock ing of the creatures, to puniſh them for that ſin and corruption unto which by his eternall Counſell they wer fore-ordained? This is even that which *Paul* objects t himſelf, Is there unrighteouſneſſe with God? Is it no unrighteouſneſſe to hate *Eſau* before he deſerve it? I he not unrighteous to adjudge him to death before he d evill? *ver.* 14. Let *Paul* anſwer for us, God forbid: why, there needs no more anſwer, but all thoughts o words which may in the leaſt reflect upon his Holineſſe are abomination; though we could not tell how it is righteous and holy with him to do, yet this we muſt hold, that it is. It is his own property to comprehend the reaſon of his

his Counsel, it is our duty to believe what he reveals of them, without further inquiry, he tells us, that thus it is, clearly in this Chap. This far then we must believe, he tells us not how it is, then further we should not desire to learn, God in keeping silence of that may put us to silence, and make us conceive that there is a depth to be admired not sounded. Yet he goeth a little further, and indeed as high as can be, to Gods will, he hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth, now further he cannot go, for there is nothing above this, we may descend from this, but we cannot ascend, or rise above it. But is this any answer to the Argument? A Sophister could presse it further, and take advantage from that very ground, What? is not this to establish a meer tyranny in the Lord, that he doth all things of meer will and pleasure, distributes rewards and punishments without previous consideration of mens carriage? But here we must stand and go no further then the Scripture walk with us, what ever reasons or causes may be assigned, yet certainly we must at length come up thither, all things are, because He so willed, and why He willed we should not ask a reason, because His will is supream reason, and the very self-rule of all righteousnesse: Therefore if once we know His will, we should presently conclude that it is most righteous and holy. If that evasion of the fore-knowledge of mens sinnes and impenitency had been found solid, certainly *Paul* would have answered so, and would not have had his refuge to the absolute will and pleasure of God, which seems to perplex it more, but he knew well, that there could nothing of that kind, whether good or evil either actually be, without his will, or be to come without the determination of that same will, and so could not be foreseen without the Counsel of His will upon it, and therefore it had been but a poor shift, to have refuge to that starting hole of fore-knowledge, out of which he must presently flee, to the will and pleasure of God, and so he betakes him straight way to that

he must hold at, and oppose that will to mens doings. *It is not of him that willeth, &c.* if he had meant only that *Iacob* and *Esau* had actually done neither good nor evil, He needed not return to the sanctuary of Gods will, for still it might be said, it is of Him that runs and wills, and not of Gods will as the first original, because their good and evil foreseen, did move him to such love and hatred. It is all alike of works and of men, whether these works be present or to come: Therefore I would advise every one of you what ever yee conceive of His judgement or mercy, if he have shewed mercy to you, O then rest not in thy self, but arise and ascend till thou come to the hight of His eternal free purpose, and if thou conceive thy sinne and misery and judgement, thou may goe up also to His holy Counsels for the glory of His name, and silence thy self with them, but it shal be most expedient for thee in the thought of thy miseries to return alwayes within, and to search the corruption of thy nature, which may alone make thee hateful enough to God. If thou search thy own conscience, it will stop thy mouth, and make thee guilty before God, Let not the thought of His eternall Counsels diminish the conviction of thy guilt, or the hatred of thy self, for sin and corruption, but dwell more constantly upon this, because thou art called and commanded so to do. One thing remains fixed, though He have foreordained men to death, yet none shal be damned till his Conscience be forced to say that he is worthy of it a thousand times.

There is another whispering and suggestion of the wicked hearts of men against the predestination of God, which insinuats that God is an accepter of persons, and so accuses him of partiall and unrighteous dealing, because he deals not equally with all men: Do yee not say this within your selves, if He find all guilty, why does He not punish all? why does He spare some? and if He look upon all men in his first and Primitive thought of them, as neither doing good nor evil, why does He not have mercy on all?

all? But is thy eye evil because He is good, may Hee not do with His own as he pleases? Because He is merciful to some souls, shal men be displeased and do well to be angry? or because hee of his own free grace extends it, shal hee be bound by a rule to do so with all? *Is* not Hee both just and merciful, and is it not meet that both be shewed forth? if he punish thee; thou cannot complain, for thou deservest it, if he shew mercy, why should any quarrel, for it is free and undeserved grace, by saving some he shews his grace, by destroying others he shews what all deserve. God is so far from being an accepter of persons according to their qualifications and conditions, that he finds nothing in any creature to cast the ballance of his choice; if he did choose men for their works sake, or outward priviledges, and refuse others for the want of these, then it might be charged on him, but he rather goes over all these, nay, he finds none of these, in his first view of men, he beholds them all alike and nothing to determine his mind to one, more then another, so that his chiose proceedeth wholly from within his own breast. *I will have mercy on whom I will.* But then thirdly our hearts object against the righteousnesse of God, that this fatall chain of predestination overturns all exhortations and perswasions to godlinesse, all care and diligence in wel-doing, For thus do many profane souls conceive, *if he be in one mind, and who can turn him?* then what need I pray, since hee has already determined what shal be, and what shal become of me, his purpose will take effect whether *I* pray, or pray none, my prayer will not make him change his mind, and if it be in his mind he will do it; If he have appointed to save, saved we will be, live as we list, if he have appointed us to death, die we must, live as we can. Therefore men in this desperat estate, throw themselves headlong into all manner of iniquity, and that with quietnes and peace. Thus do many souls perish upon the stumbling stone laid in Sion, and wrest the Truths and counsels of God to their own destruction, even quite contrare to their

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true intent and meaning. *Paul, Eph.* 1.4. ſpeaks anoche
language. *he hath choſen us in him, that wee ſhould be holy a*
without blame. His Eternal Counſel of life is ſo far fro
looſing the reins to mens luſts, that it is the only certa
foundation of holines. It is the very ſpring and fountai
from whence our ſanctification flowes, by an infallibl
courſe. This chain of Gods counſels concerning us, ha
all ſo linked together, the end and the means, glory a
grace, happineſſe and holineſſe, that there is no deſtro
ing of them, *Without holineſſe it is impoſſible to ſee God,* t
that theſe who expect the one without any deſire of, a
endeavour after the other, they are upon a vain attempt
looſe the links of this Eternal chain, *Rom.* 8. It is t
only Eternal chooſing love of God, which ſeparated
many ſouls from the common miſery of men, It is th
only which in time doth appear, and riſe as it were fro
under ground, in the ſtreams or fruits of ſanctification,
and if the ordinance of life ſtand, ſo that the ordinance o
fruits, *Ioh.* 15, 16. *Eph.* 2.10. if he have appointed thee t
life, it is certain he has alſo ordained thee to fruits, an
choſen thee to be holy, ſo that what ever ſoul caſts by th
ſtudy of this, there is too groſſe a brand of perdition upo
its forehead, It is true, all is already determined wit
him, and he is incapable of any change, or ſhadow o
turning, nothing then wants, but he is in one mind abou
it, and thy prayer cannot turn him, yet a godly ſoul will
pray with more confidence, becauſe it knowes that as he
has determined upon all its wants and receipts, ſo he
hath appointed this to be the very way of obtaining
what it wants, this is the way of familiarity and
grace, he takes with his own, to make them call, and he
performs his purpoſe in anſwer to their cry, But I ſup-
poſe there were nothing to be expected by prayer, yet
I ſay that is not the thing thou ſhould look to, but
what is required of thee as thy duty, to do that ſimply
out of regard to his Majeſty, though thou ſhould never
profite by it, this is true obedience to ſerve him for his
own

own pleasure, though we had no expectation of advantage by it, certainly he doth not require thy supplications for this end to move him, and incline his affections toward thee, but rather as a testimony of thy homage and subjection to him, therefore though they cannot make him of another mind then he is, or hasten performance before his purposed time, so that in reality they have no influence upon him, yet in praying, and praying diligently, thou declares thy obligation to him and respect to his Majesty, which is all thou hes to look to, and to commit the event solely to his good pleasure.

The 2. Objection Paul mentions, tends to justifie men, *Why then doth he yet find fault, who hath resisted his will?* Since by his will he hath chained us with an inevitable necessity to sin, what can we do? they cannot wrestle with him; why then doth he condemn and accuse them? *But who art thou O man who disputs against God?* as if *Paul* had said, thou art a man and so I am, why then looks thou for an answer from me, let us rather both consider whom we speak of, whom thou accuses, and whom I defend, it is God, what are thou then to charge him, or what am I to clear Him? Beleeving ignorance is better then presumptuous knowledge, especially in these forbiden secrets, in which it is more concerning to be ignorant with faith & admiration, then to know with presumption, dispute, thou, O man, I will wonder, reply thou, I will believe, doth it become thee, the clay to speak so to thy Former, Why hast thou made me thus? Let the consideration of the absolute right and dominion of God over us, more then any creature hath over another, yea, or over themselves, let that restrain us, and keep us within bounds. He may do with us what he pleaseth, for his own honour and praise, but it is his will that we should leave all the blame to our selves, and rather behold the evident cause of our destruction in our sin, which is nearer us, then to search into a secret and incomprehensible cause in Gods Counsell.

HEB. 11. 3. *Through Faith we understand that the worlds were made,* &c. with *Gen.* 1.

WE are come down from the Lords purposes and decrees to the execution of them, which is partly in the works of Creation, and partly in the works of Providence, the Lord having resolved upon it to manifest his own glory, did, in that due and predeterminat time apply his own power to this busineſſe, having in great wisdome conceived a frame of the world in his mind from all eternity, he at length brings it forth, and makes it visible. We shall not insist upon the particular story of it, as it is set down in generall, but only point at some things for our instruction.

First, ye see who is the Maker of all things, of whom all things visible and invisible are, it is God. And by this he useth to distinguish himself from all idols, and the vanities of the Nations, that he is that self-being, who gave all things a being, who made the Heavens and the Earth. This is even the most glorious manifestation of an invisible and eternall *being*: These things that are made shew him forth. If a man were travelling into a far Countrey, and wandered into a wilderneſſe where he could see no inhabitants, but only houses, villages, and cities built, he would straight way conceive, there hath been some work-men at this, this hath not been done casually, but by the art of some reasonable creatures; How much more may we conceive when we look on the fabrick of this world, how the Heavens are stretched out for a tent to cover them that dwell on the earth, and the earth settled and established as a firm foundation for men and living creatures to abide on, how all are done in wisedom and discretion, we cannot but straight way imagine that there must be some curious and wise contriver, and mighty Creator of these things. It is here said, that by *faith we understand that the worlds were made,* indeed faith only

only in the Word of God gives true and distinct understanding of it: Innumerable have been the wanderings and mistakes of the wise of the world about this matter, wanting this lamp and light of the Word of God, which alone gives a true and perfect account of this thing, many strange dotages and fancies have they fallen into; yet certain it is that there is so much of the glory of God ingraven without on the creature, and so much reason imprinted on the souls of men within, that (if it were not for that judiciall plague of the Lords darkning their understandings, who do not glorifie him in as far as they know him) no man could seriously and soberly consider on the visible world, but they would be constrained to conceive an invisible God: Would not every one think within himself, all these things, so excellent as they are, cannot be out of chance, neither could they make themselves, so that of necessity they must owe what they are to something beside themselves, and of this it is certain, that it cannot have its originall from any other thing, else there should be no end, therefore it must be some supream *being*, that is from no other, and of which are all things.

But next consider, when these things were made: *in the beginning*, and what beginning is that? certainly the beginning of the creation, and of time, to exclude Eternity; what ever may be said of that subtility that God might have created the world from all Eternity, for it appears even in created things, that there is no necessity of the precedent existence of the cause, since in the same instant that many things are into, in the same do they bring forth their effects, as the Sun in the first instant of its creation did illuminate; yet certainly we beleeve from the word of the Lord, that the world is actually but of a few thousand years standing, six are not yet run out since the first creating word was spoken, and since the Spirit of the Lord moved upon the waters; and this we know also, that if it had pleased his Majesty, hee might have

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created the world many thousand years before that, so that it might have been at this day of ten hundreth times ten thousand yeares ſtanding, and hee might have given it as many years, as there are numbers of men and Angels beaſts yea, and pickels of ſand upon the Sea coaſt; But it was his good pleaſure, that that very point of time in which it was created, ſhould be the beginning of time, and from that he gives us a hiſtory of the world, upon which the Church of God may reſt, and ſo ſeek no other God but the God that made theſe Heavens and earth.

This will not ſatisfie the ungodly curioſity and vanity of mens ſpirits, who will reproach the Maker for not applying ſooner to his work, and ſitting idle, ſuch an unmeaſurable ſpace of Eternity: Men wonder what he could be doing all that time, (if we may call it time which hath no beginning) and how he was imployed, I beſeech you reſtrain ſuch thoughts in you, with the fear of his glorious and incomprehenſible Majeſty, who gives no account of his matters; It is enough that this is his good pleaſure to begin then, and he conceals his reaſons to prove the ſobriety of our faith, that all men may learn an abſolute and ſimple ſtouping to his Majeſties pleaſure. Remember that which a godly man anſwered ſome wanton curious wit, who in ſcorn demanded the ſame of him, *he was preparing hell for curious and proud fools*, Said he: let us then keep our hearts as with a bridle, and repreſſe their boundleſſe wanderings within bounds, leſt we by looking upward before the beginning of the world, to ſee what God was doing, fall head-long into the eternall pit of deſtruction, and into the hands of the living God. God hath ſhewed himſelf marvelouſly theſe ſix thouſand years in the upholding this world, if we did conſider theſe continued and repeated teſtimonies of his glory, we would be overwhelmed with what we finde, though we ſearch no further, and ſuppoſe we would pleaſe our ſelves to imagine, that it had been created many years before, yet that doth not ſilence or ſtop the inſolence of mens minds,

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for it alwayes might be enquired, what the Lord was doing before that time? For Eternity is as immenſureable before theſe multiplied thouſands of years, as before ſixed ſix; Let our imagination ſit down to ſubſtract from Eternity, as many thouſands as it can multiply by all the varieties and numbers in the world, yet there is nothing abated from Eternity, it is as infinite in extent before that, as before the preſent ſix thouſand, and yet we may conceive that the Lord hath purpoſed in the beginning of the world to declare more manifeſtly to our underſtanding his Eternity, his ſelf-ſufficiency and liberty; His Eternity, that when we hear of how ſhort ſtanding the creature is, we may go upward to God himſelf, and his everlaſting being before the foundations of it were laid, may ſhine forth more brightly to our admiration, when we can ſtretch our conceptions ſo, immenſureable as far beyond the beginning of the world, and yet God is ſtill beyond the outmoſt reach of our imagination (for who can finde out the beginning of that which hath not a beginning to be found out) and our moſt extended apprehenſions falls infinitely ſhort of the dayes of the ancient of dayes, O how glorious then muſt his being be, and how boundleſſe? His ſelf-ſufficiency and perfection doth herein appear, that from ſuch an unconceiveable ſpace, he was as perfect and bleſſed in himſelf as now, the creatures adde nothing to his perfection, or ſatisfaction, he was as well pleaſed with his own all-comprehending-being, and with the very thought and purpoſe of making this world as now he is, when it is made, the Idea of it in his minde gave him as great contentment as the work it ſelf when it is done: O to conceive this aright, it would fill a ſoul with aſtoniſhing and ravithing thoughts of his bleſſednelle! Poor men weary if they be not one way or other imployed without, ſo indigent are all creatures at home, that they would weary if they went not abroad without themſelves, but to think how abſolutly God is well pleaſed with himſelf, and how all imaginable perfecti-

ons can adde nothing to his eternall self-complacency and delight in his own being, it would certainly raviſh a ſoul to delight in God alſo: and as his ſelf-ſufficiency doth herein appear, ſo his liberty and freedom is likewiſe manifeſted in it, if the world had been eternall, who would have thought that it was free for his Majeſty to make it or not? But that it had flowed from his glorious being with as naturall and neceſſar a reſultance, as light from the body of the Sun; But now it appears to all men, that for his pleaſure they are made and were created, that it was ſimply the free and abſolute motion of his will that gave a being to all things which he could withhold at his pleaſure, or ſo long as he pleaſed.

Thirdly, we have it to conſider in what condition he made all theſe things; *very good*, and that to declare his goodneſſe and wiſedom: the creature may well be called a large volume extended and ſpread out before the eyes of all men to be ſeen and read of all. It is certain if theſe things, all of them in their orders and harmonies, or any of them in their beings and qualities, were conſidered in relation to Gods Majeſty, they would teach and inſtruct the fool and the wiſe man both, in the knowledge of God. How many impreſſions hath he made in the creatures which reflect upon any ſeeing eye the very image of God: to conſider of what a vaſte and hudge frame the heavens and the earth are, and yet but one Throne to his Majeſty, the footſtool whereof is this earth wherein vain men erects many palaces; to conſider what a multitude of creatures, what varietie of fowls in the heaven, and what multiplicitie of beaſts upon the earth, what armies (as *Moſes* ſpeaks Chap. 2. 1.) and yet that none of them all are uſeleſſe, but all of them having ſome ſpeciall ends, and purpoſes they ſerve for, ſo that there is no diſcord nor diſorder, no ſuperfluity nor want in all this monarchie of the world, all of them conſpire together in ſuch a diſcord, or diſagreeing harmony, to one great purpoſe, to declare

clare the wisdome of him who *made every thing beautifull in its time*, and every thing most fit and appolite for the use it was created for; so that *the whole earth is full of his goodnesse*, he makes every creature good one to another, to supply one anothers necessities, and then notwithstanding of so many different natures and dispositions between elements and things composed of them, yet all these contrarieties have such a commistion, and are so moderated by his supream art, that they make up jointly on excellent and sweet harmony or beautifull proportion in the world: O how wise must he be who alone contrived it all? We can do nothing except we have some patern and coppie before us, but now upon this ground which God hath laid man may fancy many superstructures; But when he stretched out the Heaven, and laid the foundation of the earth, *Who being his counsellour taught him?* At whom did his Spirit take counsel? Certainly none of all these things would have entred in the heart of man to consider or contrive, *Isai.* 40. 12. 13. Some ruder spirits do gaze upon the budge and prodigious pieces of creation, as Whales and Elephants, &c. but a wise *Solomon* will go to the School of the Ant to learn the wisedom of God, and chuse out such a simple and mean creature for the object of his admiration, certainly there are wonders in the smallest and most inconsiderable creatures which faith can contemplate: O the curious ingines and draught of the finger of God, in the composition of flees, bees, flowers, &c. Men ordinarily admire more some extraordinary things, but the truth is the whole course of nature is one continued wonder, and that greater then any of the Lords works without the line; The straight and regular line of the wisedom of God (who in one constant course and tenor hath ordained the actions of all his creatures) comprehends more wonders and mysteries, as the course of the Sun, the motion of the Sea, the hanging of the earth in the empty place upon nothing, these we say are the won-

ders indeed, and comprehends ſomething in them which all the wonders of Egypt and the wilderneſſe cannot parallell. But it is the ſtupid ſecurity of men, that are onely awakened by ſome new and unuſuall paſſages of Gods works, without that ſtraight line of nature.

Then fourthly, look upon the power of God in making all of nothing, which is expreſſed here in *Heb.* 11. there is no artificer but he muſt have matter, err his art will fail him, and he can do nothing: the Maſon muſt have timber and ſtones laid to his hand, or he cannot build a houſe, the Gold-ſmith muſt have Gold or Silver or he can make a Cup or a Ring, take the moſt curious and quick inventer of them all, they muſt have ſome matter to work upon, or there knowledge is no better then ignorance, all that they can do is to give ſome ſhape or form, or to faſhion that in ſome new modell, which had a being before, ſo that whatever men have done in the world there works are all made up of theſe things which appear, and art, and skil to form and faſhion that excellently, which before was in another mould and faſhion, but he needs not ſit idle for want of materials becauſe he can make his materials, and therefore in the beginning he made Heaven and earth, not as they now are, but he made firſt the matter and ſubſtance of this univerſe, but it was as yet a rude and confuſed *Chaos* or maſſe, all in one lump without difference, but then his Majeſty ſhews his wiſedom and Art, his excellent invention, in the following dayes of the Creation, in ordering and beautyfing and forming the world as it is, and that his power might be the more known; For how eaſie is it for him to do all this? There needs no more for it but a word, let it be, and it is, *He ſpake, and it was done, He commanded, and it ſtood faſt*, not a word pronounced and audible compoſed of Letters and Syllables, miſtake it not ſo, but a word inwardly formed as it were in his Infinite Spirit, even the inclination and beck of his will ſuffices for his great works: ye ſee what labour and pains we have in our buſineſſe, how we toil and ſweat about

about it, what wreſtlings and ſtrivings in all things we do, but behold what a great work is done without pains and travel, it is a laborious thing to travel through a parcel of this earth, which is yet but as the point of the univerſe, it is troubelſome to lift or carry a little peece of ſtone or clay, its a toil even to look upward and number the ſtars of Heaven, but it was no toil, no difficult thing to his Majeſty, to ſtretch out theſe Heavens in ſuch an Infinite compaſſe, for as large as the circumference of them is, yet it is as eaſie to him to compaſſe them, as it is to us to ſpan a finger-length, or two, it is no difficulty to him to take up hills and mountains as the duſt of the ballance in his hand, and weigh them in ſcales: hath he not chained the vaſt and hudge maſſe of the weighty earth and Sea in the midſt of the empty place without a ſupporter, without foundations or pillars, *He hangeth it on nothing*, what is it I pray you that ſupportes the clouds? Who is it that binds up their waters in ſuch a way that the cloud is not rent under them, even though there be more abundance of water in them then is in all the rivers and waters round about us? *Job.* 26. 7, 8. Who is it that reſtrains and ſets bounds to the ſea, that the waters thereof though they roar, yet do not overflow the land? But this Almighty Jehovah whoſe decree and commandement is the very compaſſe, the bulwark over which they cannot flow, and all this he doth with more facility then men can ſpeak, if there were a creature that could do all things by ſpeaking, that were a ſtrange power, but yet that creature might be wearied of ſpeaking much, *but he ſpeaks and it is done*, his word is a creating word of power which makes things that are not to be, and there is no wearying of him beſides, for he is Almighty and cannot faint, but why then did he take ſix dayes for his work? Might he not with one word ſo his power have commanded this world to iſſue out of his omnipotent vertue thus perfect as it is? What needed all this compaſſe? Why took he ſix dayes, who in a mo-

ment could have done it all with as much facility? Indeed herein the Lord would have us to adore his wisedom, as well as his power, he proceeds from more imperfect things to more perfect, from a confused *Chaos*, to a beautifull world, from motion to rest, to teach man to walk through this wilderneſſe and valley of tears, this ſhapeleſſe world, into a more beautifull habitation, through the toſſings of time, into an eternall Sabbath of reſt, whether their works ſhall follow them, and they ſhall reſt from their labours: He would teach us to take a ſtedfaſt look of his work, and that we ſhould be buſied all the day of our pilgrimage and ſojourning, in the conſideration of the glorious characters of God upon the works of his hands, we ſee that it is but paſſing locks and glances of Gods glory we take in the creatures, but the Lord would have us to make it our work and buſineſſe all the week through, as it was his to make them; He would in this teach us his loving care of men, who would not create man, till he had made for him ſo glorious an houſe, repleniſhed with all good things; It had been a darkſome and irkſome life to have lived in the firſt *Chaos*, without light, but he hath ſtretched over him the Heavens as his Tent, and ſet lights in them to diſtinguiſh times and ſeaſons, and ordained the waters their proper bounds, and peculiar channels, and then maketh the earth to bring forth all manner of fruit, and when all is thus diſpoſed, then he creats man. To this God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, be glory and praiſe.

HEB. 11. 3. *and* HEB. 1. 14. *Are they not all miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter*, &c.

THere is nothing more generally known then this, that God at the beginning made the heaven and the earth, and all the hoſt of them, the upper or the cœleſtial, the lower or ſublunarie world, but yet there is nothing ſo little beleeved or laid to heart: *By faith we underſtand that the worlds were made.* It is one of the firſt Articles of the Creed indeed, *Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth*, but I fear that Creed be not written in the Tables of fleſh, that is the heart: There is a twofold miſtake among men about the point of believing, ſome, and the commoner ſort do thinkle is no other thing then ſimply to know ſuch a thing, and not to queſtion it, to hear it, and not to contradict it, or object againſt it; Therefore they do flatter themſelves in their own eyes, and do account themſelves to have faith in God, becauſe they can ſay over all the Articles of their Belief, they think the Word is true, and they never doubted of it; But I beſeech you conſider how greatly you miſtake a main matter of weighty concernment? If you will ſearch it as before the Lord, you will find you have no other belief of theſe things, then children uſe to have whom you teach to think or ſay any thing, there is no other ground of your not queſtioning theſe truths of the Goſpel, but becauſe you never conſider on them, and ſo they paſſe for current; Do not deceive your ſelves, *with the heart man believes*, it is a heart-buſineſſe, a ſoul-matter, no light and uſeleſſe opinion, or empty expreſſion, which you have learned from a child: You ſay you believe in God the Maker of Heaven and Earth, and ſo ſay children who doubt no more of it then ye, and yet in ſadneſſe they do

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not retire within their own hearts, to think what a one he is, they do not remember him in the works of his hands: there is no more remembrance of that true God then if no such thing were known; So it is among you, you would think we wronged you, if we said ye believed not that God made the world, and yet certainly all men have not this faith, whereby they understand truly in their heart the power, and wisdome, and goodnesse of God appearing in it, that is the gift of God only given to them that shall be saved. If I should say that you believe not the most common principles of Religion, you would think it hard, and yet there is no doubt of it, that the most common truths are least believed, and the reason is plain, because men have learned them by tongue, and there is none that question them, and therefore very few ever in sadnesse and in earnest consider of them: You say that God made Heaven and Earth, but how often do you think on that God? And how often do you think on him with admiration? Do ye at all wonder at the glory of God, when you gaze on his works? Is not this volume alwayes obversant before your eyes, every thing shewing and declaring this glorious Maker, yet who is it that taketh more notice of him, then if he were not at all; such is the generall stupidity of men, that they never ponder and digest these things in their heart, till their soul receive the stamp of the glory and greatnesse of the invisible God, which shines most brightly on these things that are visible, and be in some measure transformed in their minds, and conformed to these glorious appearances of him, which are engraven in great characters in all that do at all appear. There is another mistake peculiar to some, especially the Lords people, that they think faith is limited to some few particular and more unknown and hid truths and mysteries of the Gospel. Ye think that it is only true believing, to imbrace some speciall Gospel-truths, which the multitude of people know nothing of, as the tenor of the Covenant of Grace and of Works, &c.

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and for other common Principles, of Gods making and ruling the world, you think that a common thing to believe them. But ſaith the Apoſtle, *By faith we underſtand that the worlds were made*, it is that ſame faith ſpoken of in the end of the 10. Chap. by which the juſt ſhall live: So then there is a point of ſaving faith, to believe with the heart in God the Creator and Father Almighty, to take a view of Gods Almighty power and ſufficient goodneſſe, and infinite wiſdome ſhining in the fabrick of the world, and look with delight and admiration at ſuch a glorious Fourſin-being; to riſe up to his Majeſty by the degrees of his creatures, this is the climing and aſpiring nature of Faith. You ſee how much theſe Saints in the Old Teſtament were in this, and certainly they had more excellent and glorious thoughts of God then we. It ſhould make Chriſtians aſhamed, that both Heathens who had no other Book opened to them, but that of Nature, did read more diligently then we; And that the Saints of old, who had not ſuch a plain teſtimony of God as we now have, yet did learn more out of the Book of the Creature, then we do both out of it and the Scriptures: We look on all things with ſuch a careleſſe eye, and do not obſerve what may be found of God in them: I think verily there are many Chriſtians, and Miniſters of the Goſpel, who do not aſcend into theſe high and raviſhing thoughts of God, in his being and working, as wou'd become even meer Naturaliſts; How little can they ſpeak of his Majeſty, or think as it becomes his tranſcendent glory. There is little in Sermons or diſcourſes that holds out any ſingular admiring thoughts of a Deity, but in all theſe we are ſo common and careleſſe, as if he were an Idol.

It is not in vain that it is expreſſed thus, *By faith we know that the worlds were made*, for certainly the firm believing and pondering of this one truth, would be of great moment and uſe to a Chriſtian in all his journey. You may obſerve in what ſtead it is to the Saints in Scriptures,

pture, this raises up a soul to high thoughts, and sut conceptions of his glorious Name, and so conforms worship of his Majesty unto his excellency, it puts stamp of Divinity upon it, and spiritualizes the thoug and affections so, as to put a true difference between true God, and the gods that made not the Heavens the Earth. Alace, the worship of many Christians spe out no diviner or higher object then a creature, it is cold-rise, so formall and empty, so vain and wanderi there is no more respect testified unto him, then we wo give to some eminent person: You find in the Scrip how the strain of the Saints affections and devotion ri when they take up God in his absolute Supremacy abo the creatures, and look on him as the alone Fountain all that is worth the name of perfection in them. A s in that consideration cannot chuse but assign unto him most eminent seat in the heart, and gather these affectio which are scattered after the creatures, into one channe to powre them out on him who is all in all, and hath that which is lovely in the creatures in an eminent degre Therefore know what you are formed for, to shew for his praise, to gather and take up from the creatures all fruits of his praise, and offer them up to his Majesty, th was the end of man, and this is the end of a Christia you are made for this, and you were redeemed for thi to read upon the volumes of his works, and word, an from thence extract songs of praise to his Majesty.

As this would be of great moment to the right wo shipping of God, and to the exercise of true holinesse; it is most effectuall to the establing of a soul in the con dence of the promises of God: When a soul by faith un derstands the world was made by God, then it rely with confidence upon that same Word of God, as a wor of power, and hopes against hope: There are man things in the Christians way betwixt and glory, whic looks as insuparable, thou art often emptied into nothing and stript naked of all encouragements, and there is no thin

ing remaining but the Word of Gods promiſes thee and to the Church, which ſeems contrary to ſe and reaſon; Now, I ſay, if thou do indeed be-ve that the world was made by God, then out of all eſtion thou may ſilence all thy fears with this one ught, God created this whole frame out of nothing, commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſſe, then tainly he can give a being to his own promiſes, is not s word of promiſe as ſure and effectuall as his word of mmand? This is the grand incouragement of the Church, ch offered by God, *Iſai.* from 40. Chap. and made uſe by his Saints, as *David*, *Hezekiah*, &c. What is it ould diſquiet a ſoul if it were reſted on this Rock of Creating Power and Faithfulneſſe? This would alwayes ound in its ears, faint not, weary not *Jacob. I am God, and none elſe, the portion of* Jacob *is not like others*, be it in-ard or outward difficulties, ſuppoſe hell and earth com-bined together, let all the enemies of a ſoul, or of the Church aſſemble, here is one for all, the God that made he Heaven and the Earth can ſpeak, *and it is done*, com-mand, *and it ſtands faſt*: *He creats peace, and who then can make trouble*, when he gives quietneſſe to a Nation, or to a perſon. Almighty power works in Saints, and for Saints, let us truſt in him.

GEN. 1. 26, 27. *And God ſaid let us make man after our own image*, with EPH. 4. 24. and, HEB. 3. 10.

WHile we deſcend from the meditation of the glory of God ſhining in the Heavens, in Sun, Moon and Stars, unto the conſideration of the Lords framing of man after this manner, we may fall into admiration with the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 8. *Lord what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the*

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Son of man that thou ſhouldeſt remember him. It might inde
drown us in wonder, and aſtoniſh us, to think what ſp
cial notice He hath taken of ſuch a creature from t
very beginning, and put more reſpect upon him th
upon all the more excellent works of his hands; y
find here the creation of man expreſſed in other term
then was uſed before, He ſaid, *let there be light, and it w*
let there be dry land. But it is not ſuch a ſimple word
that, *but let us make man according to our image*, as if G
had called a conſultation about it, what was there a
more difficulty in this then in the reſt of his works? nee
ed He any adviſement about his frame and conſtitution
no certainly, for there was as great works of power,
curious pieces of art and wiſedom, which was inſtan
done upon his word, He is not a man that he ſhould ad
viſe or conſult, as there is no difficulty nor impediment i
the way of his power, (He doth all that He pleaſes, *adnutu*
at his very word or nod, ſo eaſie are impoſſibilities t
him) ſo there is nothing hard to his wiſedom, no kn
but it can looſe, nothing ſo curious or exquiſit, but hee ca
as curiouſly contrive it, as the moſt common and groſſ
peices of the Creation, and therefore, *He is wonderfull i*
counſel, and excellent in working. But ye have here expreſſe
as it were a counſel of the Holy and bleſſed Trinity a
bout mans Creation, to ſignifie to us, what peculiar re
ſpect he puts upon that creature, and what ſpecial notic
he takes of us, that of his own free purpoſe and good plea
ſure he was to ſingle and chooſe out man from among all
other creatures, for the more eminent demonſtration of hi
glorious attributes of grace, mercy, and juſtice upon him;
and likewiſe to point out the excellency that God di
ſtamp upon man in his creation beyond the reſt of the
creatures, as the Apoſtle ſhowes the excellency of Chriſt
above Angels, *to which of the Angels ſaid he at any time thou*
art my Son? Heb. 1. 5. So we may ſay, of which of the
creatures ſaid he at any time, come, let us make them in
our image, after our likeneſſe? O how ſhould this make u

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ten to hear, earneſt to know what man once was, how nobled of God and ſet above the works of his hands? there is a great deſire in men to ſearch into their original, and to trade backward the dark footſteps of antiquity, eſpecially if they be put in expectation of attaining any honourable or memorable extraction? How will men love to hear of the worth of their Anceſtours? But what a ſtupidity doth poſſeſſe the moſt part in relation to the high fountain and head of all, that they do not aime as high as *Adam*, to know the very eſtate of humane nature: hence it is that the moſt part of people ly ſtill aſtonished, rather ſtupid and ſenſleſſe after this great fall of man, becauſe thy never look upward to the place and dignity from whence man did fall. It is certain you will never duly underſtand your ſelves or what ye are, till ye know firſt what man was made? You cannot imagine what your preſent miſery is, till you once know what that felicity was, in which man was made (*let us make man in our image*) ſome have called man μικροκοσμὸν, a little world, a compend of the world, becauſe he hath Heaven and earth as it were married together in him; two moſt remote and diſtant natures, the duſt of the Earth, and the immortall breath, which is called the breath of God, ſweetly linked and conjoyned together, with a diſpoſition and inclination one to another. The Lord was in this peece of workmanſhip as it were to give a narrow and ſhort compend of all his works, and ſo did aſſociat in one peece with marvelous wiſedom, being, living, moving, ſenſe and reaſon, which are ſcattered abroad in the other creatures, ſo that a man carries theſe wonders about with him, which he admires without him. At his bare and ſimple word this huge frame of the world ſtarted out of nothing, but in this he acts the part of a cunning Artificer, *let us make man*, hee takes rather then creats, firſt raiſes the walls of fleſh, builds the houſe of the body with all its Organs, all its rooms and then he puts in a noble and divine gueſt to dwell in it, *he breaths in it the breath of life*, he incloſes as

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it were, an Angel within it, and marries these two togeth into the most admirable union and communion, that c be imagined, so that they make up one man.

But that which the Lord looks most into in this wor and would have us most to consider, is that image of hi self that he did imprint on man (*let us make man in our o image*) there was no creature but it had some ingravin of God upon it, some curious draughts and lineamen of his Power, Wisedom, and Goodnsse upon it, and ther fore the Heavens are said, *to shew forth his glory*, & But what ever they have, it is but the lower part of th image, some dark shaddows and resemblances of hi but that which is the last of his works, he maks it *accordi to his own image, tanquam ab ultima manu*, he therin gives o himselfe to be read and seen of all men as in a glasse, oth creaturs are made as it were according to the similitud of h footstep, *ad similitudinem vestigii*, but man, *ad similitudine faciei*, according to the likenesse of his face, (*in our Ima after our likenesse*) its true there is one only, Jesus Chr his Son, who is *the brightnesse of his glory, and the expres substantial image of his person*, who resembles him perfect and throughly in all properties, so that he is *alter ide* another-self both in nature, properties, and operations, like him that he is one with him, so that it is rather a *onnesse*, then a likness; but man he created according his own image, and gave him to have some likness himself, liknes I say, not *sameneße*, or *onenesse*. That high indeed to be like God, The notion and expressio of it imports some strange thing, how could man be li God, who is infinit, incomprehensible, whose glory not communicable to another? It is tue indeed, in the incommunicable properties he hath not only, no equa but none to liken him, in these he is to be adored, an admired as infinitly transcending all created perfection and conceptions; but yet in others he has been pleased t hold forth himself to be imitated and followed, and th this might be done, he first stamps them upon man i

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firſt moulding of him, and if yee would know what
e are particularly, the Apoſtle expreſſes them, *Col.* 3.
in knowledge, in righteouſneſſe and holineſſ. Eph. 4. 24.
is is the image of him who created him, which the
ator ſtamped on man, that he might ſeek him, and
him apart for himſelf to keep communion with him, and
bleſſe him. There is a Spirit given to man with a
acity to know, and to will, And here is a draught and
ament of Gods face, which is not ingraven on any
ſitive creature; It is one of the moſt noble and excel-
operations of life, in which a man is moſt above
ſts, to reflect upon himſelf, and to know himſelf and
Creator; There are naturall inſtincts given to other
ings, natural propenſions to theſe things that are conve-
ent to their own nature, but none of them have ſo much
a capacity to know what they are, or what they have,
y cannot frame a notion of him who gave them a being,
e are only proportionat to the diſcerning of ſome ſen-
ble things, and can reach no further: he hath limitted
eye within colloures, and light; he hath ſet a bounds
the ear that it cannot go without ſounds, and ſo to every
ſe he hath aſſigned his own proper ſtance, in which it
oves; but he teaches man knowledge, and he inlarges
e Sphear of his underſtanding beyond viſible or ſenſible
ings, to things inviſible, to ſpirits, and this capacity he
as put in the ſoul to know all things, and it ſelf among
hereſt; the eye diſcerns light, but ſees not it ſelf, but he
ives a Spirit to man to know himſelf, and his God:
nd then there is a willing power in the ſoul by which it
iffuſes it ſelf towards any thing that is conceived as good;
he underſtanding, directing, and the will-commanding
ccording to its direction, and then the whole faculties
nd ſenſes obeying ſuch commands, which maks up an ex-
ellent draught of the image of God: There was a ſweet
roportion and harmony in *Adam*, all was in due place,
nd ſubordination; the motions of immortal man did
egin within, the lamp of reaſon did ſhine and give light
to

to it, and till that went before, there was no stirring, no choosing, no refusing, and when reason which was a sparkle of the divine nature, or a ray of Gods light reflected into the soul of man, when once that did appear in the discerning of good and evill, this power was in the soul to apply the whole man accordingly, to choose the good and refuse the evill, it had not been a lively resemblance of God to have a power of knowing and willing simply, unless these had been beautified and adorned with supernatural and divine graces of spiritual Light, and holinesse, and righteousnesse, these make up the lively colour and compleat the image of God upon the soul.

There was a divine Light which did shine in upon the understanding, ever till sin interposed and Eclipsed it, and from the light of Gods countenance did the sweet heat and warmnesse of holinesse and uprightnesse in the affections proceed, so that there was nothing but purity and cleannesse in the soul, no darknesse of ignorance, no muddinesse of carnall affections, but the soul pure and transparant, to receive the refreshing and enlightning rayes of Gods glorious countenance, and this was the very face and beauty of the soul, it is that only that is the beauty and excellency of the creature conformity to God, and this was throughout, in understanding and affections, the understanding conformed to his understanding, discerning between good and evill, and conformed it behoved to be, for it was but a ray of that Sun, a stream of that Fountain of wisedom, and a light derived from that primitive light of Gods understanding; and then the will did sympathize as much with his will, approving and choosing what he approved, and refusing that which he hated: *Idem velle atque idem nolle ea demum firma est amicitia*, that was the conjunction, and it is more strait then any tye among men, there was not two wills, they were as it were one, the love of God reflecting into the soul, did as it were carry the soul back again unto him, and that was the conforming principle which

fashioned

whole man without and within, to his likeneſſe, and his obedience? Thus man was formed for communion with God, this likeneſſe behoved to be, or they could not join as friends.

But now this calls us to a ſad meditation, to think from whence we have fallen, and ſo how great our fall is, to fall from ſuch a bleſſed eſtate that muſt be great miſery: than hath ſpoiled us of our rich treaſure, that glorious image of holineſſe, And hath drawn upon our ſouls the very viſage of hell, the lineaments of his helliſh countenance, but the moſt part of men ly ſtupid, inſenſible of any thing, as beaſts that are felled with their fall, that can neither finde pain nor ſhame; If we could but return and conſider what are all theſe ſad and wofull conſequents of ſin in the world, what a ſtrange diſtemper it hath put in the Creation? What miſeries that one fall hath brought on all mankinde? I am ſure by theſe bruiſes we might conjecture what a ſtrange fall it hath been. Sin did interpoſe between God and us, and this darkened our ſoules, and killed them; the light of knowledge was put out, and the life of holineſſe extinguiſhed, and now there remains nothing of all that ſtately building, but ſome ruines of common principles of reaſon, and hoarely engraven on all mens conſciences, which may ſhew unto us what the building hath been, we have fallen from holineſſe, and ſo from happineſſe, our ſouls are deformed and defiled, you ſee what a ill favoured thing it is to ſee a child wanting any members. O if ſin were viſible, how ugly would the ſhape of the ſoul be to us, ſince it loſt the very proportion and viſage of it, that is Gods image? Let us conſider this doctrine, that we may know from whence we have fallen, and into what a gulf of ſin and miſery we have fallen, that the new news of Jeſus Chriſt a Mediator and Redeemer of fallen man, may be ſweet unto us. Thus it pleaſed the Lord to let his image be marred and quite ſpoiled in us, for he had this deſigne to repair it and renew it better then of old, and

for this end he hath created Christ according to His image, he hath stamped that image of holineſſe upon his fleſh, to be a patern, and not only ſo, but a pledge alſo of reſtoring ſuch ſouls as flee unto him for refuge unto that primitive glory and excellency: Know then that He hath made his Son like unto us, that we might again be made like unto him, he ſaid, let one of us be made man, in the counſell of Redemption, that ſo it might again be ſaid, let man made be like unto us, in our image; it is a ſecond Creation muſt do it, and O that you would look upon your hearts to enquire if it be framed in you, certainly you muſt again be created into that image if you belong to Chriſt, to him be Praiſe and Glory.

Of Divine Providence

ROM. 11. 36. *Of Him and through, and for Him are all things* &c. PSAL. 103. 19. *His Kingdome is over all.* MATTH. 10. 29. *A Sparrow ſhall not fall without your Fathers will.*

THere is nothing more commonly confeſſed in words, then that the providence of God reaches to all the creatures and their actions; But I beleeve there is no point of Religion ſo ſuperficially and ſlightly conſidered by the moſt part of men: The moſt part ponder none of theſe divine truths, there is nothing above their ſenſes which is the ſubject of their meditation, and for the children of God, I fear many do give ſuch truths of God to common and courſe intertainment in their minds, through a conceit of the commonneſſe of them. I know not what we are taken up with in this age, with ſome particular truths more remote from the knowledge of others in former times, or ſome

ome particular cases concerning our selves? you will nde the most part of Christians stretch not their thoghts eyond their own conditions or interests, or some parcular questions, about Faith and Repentance, &c. And the mean time the most weighty points of Religion, hich have been the subject of the mediation and admiation of Saints in all ages, are wholly laid aside, through misapprehension of their commonnesse, as if a man wold espise the Sun and the Air, and preferre some rare peece stone or timber to them. Certainly as in the disposall the world, the Lord hath in great wiesdom and goodsse made the most needfull and usefull things most ommon, these without which man cannot live, are alayes obvious to us, so that if any thing be more rare, it not necessary; So in this universe of Religion, he mercy and wisecom hath so framed all, that these points truth and beleefe, which are most near the substance Salvation, and necessary to it, and most fit to exercise in true godlinesse, these are every where to be found, artly engraven on mens hearts, partly set down most learly and often in Scripture, that a beleeving soul can ook no where, but it must breath in that air of the Gospel, and look upon that common Sun of Righteousnesse, God the Creator, and the healing Sun Christ the Redeemer, shining every where in scripture. The generall providence of God, and the speciall administration of Christ the Saviour, these are common, and these re essentiall to our happinesse; therefore the meditation f Christians should run most upon them, and not alayes about some particular questions or debates of the ime. It is a strange thing how people would be more affected with a discourse on the affaires of the time, or on ome inward thoughts of their own hearts, then if one hould speak of Gods Universall Kingdome over all men nd nations, that is accounted a generall and ordinar discourse, even as if men would set at nought the Suns light, ecause it shines to all, and every day; Or would di-

ſpiſe the water, becauſe it may be found every where
Let the Sun be removed for ſome dayes, and O what
would the world account of it beyond all your curious di-
vices or rare enjoyments. This is it which would in-
creaſe to more true godlineſs, if rightly beleeved, then ma-
ny other things ye are buſied withall. Its our generall vie
of them makes them but generall. I ſpoke once upon thi
word, *Rom.* 11. 36. But only in reference to the end o
man, which is Gods glory; But the words do exten
further, and we muſt now conſider what further they hol
forth. The Apoſtle hath been ſpeaking of the Lords un
ſearchable wayes and judgements towards men, in th
diſpenſation of grace and ſalvation, how free and how ab
ſolute he is in that? And this he ſtrengthens by th
ſupream wiſedom of God, *who did direct him?* Wh
doeſt thou O man take upon thee to direct him now
For where was there any counſellor, when he alone con
trived all the frame of this world, and then by ſoveraign
highneſſe and ſupremacie over the creatures diſpoled o
them? For he is debitor to none, therefore none ca
quarrel him for giving or not giving, for who was it th
gave him firſt, for which he ſhould give a recom
pence? Was there any could prevent him with a gift
Nay, none could, ſaith he, *for of Him, and through Him
and for him are all things*: And therefore he muſt pre
vent men, for from whence ſhould that gift of the crea
ture which could oblidge him have its riſe, it muſt be
God if it be a creature, and therefore he is in no man
common, he muſt give it ere we have it to give Hi
again.

The words are moſt comprehenſive, they comprehen
all things, and that is very large: There is nothin
without this compaſſe, and they comprehend all the de
pendance of things. Things depend upon that whic
made them, that which preſerves them, and that fo
which they are made. All things depend on him as the
producing cauſe, that firſt gives them a being: *For*
Hi

him are all things, they also depend on Him as their conserving cause, who continnues their being by that selfe same influence wherewith he gave it. for through him are all things: And then they depend on him as their finall cause. for whose glory they are, and are continued, for, *of Him are all things*. Thus you have the beginning, the continuance, and the end of the whole Creation: This word may lead us through all, from God as the beginning, the *Alpha* and originall of their being: Through God as the only supporter, confirmer, and upholder of their being: And unto God as the very end for which they have their being. Now to travel within this compasse, to walk continually within this circle, and to go alongs this blessed round, to begin at God and to go alongs all our way with him, till we arrive and end at God, and thus to do continually in the journey of meditation, when it surveyes any of his works, this were indeed the very proper work, and the speciall happiness man was created for; And I may say, a great part of that for which a Christian is created for again: there would be nothing more powerfull to the conforming of a soul to God, and to his obedience and fear, then this, to have that perswasion firmly rooted in the heart, *that of God are all things*, that what ever it be, good or evill that befalls us, or others what ever we observe in the world, that is the subject of the thoughts and discourses of men, and turns mens eyes after them, that all that is of God; that is, it is in the world, its started out of nothing at his command, it is, because his power gave it a being, and in this consideration to overlook and in a manner forget all second causes, to have such affecting and uptaking thoughts of the first principle of all these motions, as to regard the lower wheels that are next us, no more then the hand or the sword that a man strikes us with; As if these second causes had no influence of their own, but were meerly acted and moved by this supreme power, as if God did nothing by them, but only at their presence. We would

o labour to look on these things he doth by creatures, as if He did them alone without the creatures, as if He were this day creating a world: Certainly the solid Faith of Gods providence will draw off the covering of the creature, and espie the secret Almighty power which acts in every thing, to bring forth his good pleasure concerning them: And then to consider with that same seriousnesse of meditation that that same everlasting arm which made them, is under them to support them, that the most noble and excellent creatures are but streams, rayes, images, and shaddows of Gods Majesty, which as they have their being by derivation, so they have their continuance by that same continued influence; so that if he would interpose between himself and them, or withdraw his countenance, or stop his influence, the most sufficient of them all should evanish as the Sun beams, drie up as the streams of a fountain, and disappear as the image of the glasse, *Psal.* 104. 29. 30. O that place were a pertinent object of a Christians meditation, how much of God is to be prest out of it by serious pondering of it? *Thou hides thy face and they are troubled. thou takes away thy breath and they die, thou sends out thy Spirit and they are created.* It is even with the very being and faculties of the creature, as with the image in the glasse, which when the face removes its seen no more; The Lord as it were breaths into them a being, and when he takes in his breath they perish, and when he sends it out again they are renewed; We do not wonder at the standing of the world, but think if we had been witnesses of the making of it, we would have been filled with admiration; But certainly its only our stupidity that doth not behold that same wonder continued, for what is the upholding of this by his power, but a very continued and repeated Creation? Which influence were able to bring a world out of nothing, if this had not been before the vertue and power hee imployes now in making them subsist, that same alone without any addition of power, would have in the beginning made all this to be of nothing, so that the continuance

sinuance of the world is nothing els but an uninterupted, & constant fluxe and emanation of these things from God, as of light from the body of the Sun. And then to meditate how all these things are for him, and his Glory, though we know no use nor end of them, yet, that his Majestie hath appointed them to shew forth on way or other the Glory of his name in them, and these things which to our first and foolish apprehensions seem most contrary to him, and as it were to spread a clout of darkenesse over his Glorious name, the sins and perverse doings of men & Angels, the many disorders & confusions in the world, which seem to reflect some way upon him, that yet he hath holy and glorious ends in them all, yea that himself is the end of all: I say, to meditate on these things till our soul received the stamp of reverence, and fear, and faith in God, this would certainly be the most becoming exercise of a Christian, to bring all things down from God, that we might return and ascend with all things again unto God.

This is the most suteable employment of a man as reasonable, much more as Christian, that very duty he was created for. *This people have I formed for my self they shall shew forth my praise, Isai 43. 21.* And this is the shewing forth of his praise, to follow forth the footsteps of God in the word, and in the world, and to ponder these paths of divine power, and goodnesse, and wisedom, and to acknowledge him with our heart in all these. He made many creatures on which his glory and praise is shewed forth, and he made this creature man, to shew forth that praise, and that glory which is shewed forth in other creatures. O but this is a divine office, it is strange how our hearts are carried forth towards base things, and busied in many vain, impertinent and base employments, and scarce ever minds this great one we were created for.

Certainly this is the imployment we were made for, to deduce all things from God, till we can again reduce

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all again to him with glory, to bring all down from his everlasting counsels, untill we send all up to his Eternall glory, together with the sacrifice of our hearts; To behold all things to be *of him*, that is of his eternall counsell and decree, to have their rise in the bosome of that, and then *through him*, to proceed out of the bosome of his decree and purpose by his power, *quasi obstetricante Potentia*, and then to return with all the praise and glory to his ever glorious Name, *for whom are all things*. There is none but they will allow God some government in the world, some would have him as a King, commanding and doeing all by deputies, and substitutes; Some would have his influence generall, like the Suns upon sublunarie things, but how shallow are all mens thoughts in regard of that which is: God has prepared indeed His Throne in Heaven, that is true, that his glory doth manifest it self in some strange and majestick manner above, but the whole tenor of Scripture shews that he is not shut up in Heaven, but that he immediatly cares for, governs, and disposes all things in the world, *for His Kingdome is over all*: It is the weakness of Kings, not their glory, that they have need of deputies, it is his glory, not baseness, to look to the meanest of his creatures, it is a poor resemblance and empty shaddow that Kings have of him, *He rules in the kingdomes of men*, and to him belongs the dominion and the glory, he deserves the name of a King, whose beck Heaven and earth obeyes. Can a king command that the sea flow not, can a Parliament act and ordain that the Sun rise not, or will these obey them? Yet at his decree and command the Sun is dark, the sea stands still, the mountains tremble, *at Thy rebuke the sea fled*. Alas what do we mean that we look upon creatures, and act as our selves as if we were independent in our being and moving? How many things fall out and you call them casuall, and attribute them to fortune? How many things do the world gaze upon, think upon, and discourse upon, and yet not one thought, one word of God all the time?

What

What more contingent then the falling of a ſparrow on the ground? And yet even that is not unexpected to him, but it flows from his will and counſel: What leſſe taken notice of or known then the hairs of your head, yet theſe are particularly numbered by him, and ſo no power in the world can adde to them, or diminiſh from them, without his counſel? O what would the beleef of this do to raiſe our hearts to ſuitable thoughts of God above the creatures, to increaſe the fear, faith, and love of God, and to abate from our fear of men, and our vain and unprofitable cares, and perplexities? How would you look upon the affairs of men, the counſels, contrivances, endeavours, and ſucceſſes of men, when they are turning things upſide down, and plotting the ruine of his people, and eſtabliſhing themſelves alone in the earth? What would you think of all theſe revolutions at this time? Many ſouls are aſtoniſhed at them, and ſtand gazing at what is done and to be done, and this is the very language of your ſpirits and wayes. *The Lord hath forſaken the earth*, the Lord ſeeth not, this is the language of our Parliament and people. they do imagine that they are doing their own buſineſſe, and making all ſure for themſelves: But O what would a ſoul think that could eſcape above them all, and ariſe up to the firſt wheel of preſent motions? A ſoul that did ſtand upon the exalted tower of the word of God, and looked off it by the proſpect of faith, would preſently diſcover the circle in which all theſe wanderings and changes are confined, and Seamen, States, Armies, Nations, and all of them doing nothing but turning about in a round, (as a horſe in a milln) from Gods eternall purpoſe, by his almighty power, to his unſpeakable glory: you might behold all theſe extravagant motions of the creatur, incloſed within thoſe limits, that they muſt begin here, and end here, though themſelves are ſo beaſtly, that they neither know *of whom*, nor *for whom* their counſels and actions are: certainly Satan cannot break without this compaſſe to ſerve his own humor,

mor, principalities and powe scannot do it. If they will not glorify him, he shal glorify himself by them, and upon them.

GEN. 2. 17. *In that day thou eats, thou shalt die.*

GEN. 1. 26. *Let us make man according to our Image.*

THe state wherein man was created at first, you heard was exceeding good, all things very good, and ne best of all, the choicest externall and visible peece of Gods workmanship, made according to the most excellent patern, *after our image*, though it be a double misery to be once happy, yet to ing the knowledge of our misery is by the grace of God made the entry to a new happinesse, it is most necessary to take a view of what man once was, that we may be more sensible of what he now is. You may take up this image and likenesse in three branches. First there was a sweet conformity of the soul in its ande standing, will, and affections unto Gods holinesse and light; A beautifull light in the mind, derived from that fountain-light, by which *Adam* did exactly know both divine and naturall things: What a great difference doth yet appear between a learned man and an ignorant rude person, though it be but in relation to naturall things, the one is but like a beast in comparison of the other? O how much more was there between *Adams* knowledge, and that of the most learned? The highest advancement of Art and industry in this, reaches no further then to a learned ignorance of the mysteries in the works of God, and yet there is a wonderful satisfaction to the minde in it; But how much sweet complacency hath *Adam* had, whose heart

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was ſo enlarged as to know both things higher and lower, their natures, properties and vertues, and ſeverall operations? No doubt could trouble him, no difficultie vex him, no controverſie or queſtion perplex him, but above all the knowledge of that glorious and eternall being, that gave him a being, and infuſed ſuch a ſpirit into him, the beholding of ſuch infinite treaſures of wiſedom, and goodneſſe, and power in him, what an amiable and refreſhfull ſight would it be, when there was no cloud of ſin or ignorance, to interpoſe and eccliſpe the full enjoyment of that increated light? When the aſpect of the Sun makes the Moon ſo glorious and beautifull, what may you conceive of *Adams* ſoul framed with acapacity to receive light immediatly from Gods countenance? How fair and beautifull would that ſoul be untill the dark cloud of ſinne did interpoſe it ſelf? Then conſider what a beautifull rectitude and uprightneſſe, what a comely order and ſubordination would enſue upon this light, and make his will and affections wonderfull good? Eccl. 7. 29. *God made man upright.* There was no throw nor cracke in all, all the powers of the ſoul bending upright towards that fountaine of all goodneſſe, now the ſoul is crooked and bends downward towards thoſe baſe earthly things, that is the abaſement of the ſoul; then it looked upright towrads God, had no appetite, no delight but in him and his fulneſſe, and had the moon or changeable world under its feet; there was a beauty of holineſſe and righteouſneſſe, which were the colloures, that God did perfect and adorne theſe lineaments of the image of God, which knowledge did draw in the ſoul: *He was a burning and a ſhining light*, may be truely ſaid of *Adam*, who had as much life as light, as much delight in God as knowledge of him, this was the right conſtitution and diſpoſition of man, his head lifted up in holineſſe and love towards God, His arms ſtretched out in righteouſneſs and equity towards man, and all the affections of the man under their command, they could not trouble this

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ſea with any tempeſt, becauſe they were under ſuch a powerfull commander, who keept them under ſuch aw and obedience, as the Centurion his ſervants, ſaying to one go, and he goeth, and to another come, and it cometh, ſending out love one way, holy hatred another way. Theſe were as winges to the bird to flee upon, as wheels to the chariot to run upon, though now it be turned juſt contrare, that the chariot draws the Coatch-man, becauſe the motion is downward. There could be no motion in an upright mans ſoul, till the holy and righteous will gave out a ſentence upon it, that was the *Primum mobile*, which was turned about it ſelf, by ſuch an *intelligentia* as the underſtanding. And ſo it was in Chriſt. affection could not move him but he did move his own affections, *He troubled himſelf*. In us the ſervant rides on horſes, and the Prince walks on foot, and as in a diſtempered ſociety, the Laws and Ordinances proceeds by an unnaturall way from the violence of unruly ſubjects uſurping over their Maſters. Holy and righteous man could both raiſe up his affections, and compoſe them again, they were under ſuch nurture and diſcipline; He could have ſaid hitherto, and no further, in which there was no reſemblance of God, ruling the raging and unruly ſea; But now if once they get entry into our city, they are more powerfull then the Governour, and will not take laws from him, but give rather; when we have given way to our paſſions, they do next what they pleaſe, not what we permit.

Next his excellency conſiſted in ſuch an immunity and freedom from all fear of miſery and danger, from all touch of ſorrow or pain, and did enjoy ſuch an holy Complacencie and delight in His own eſtate, as made him compleatly happy. In this he was like God. That is His bleſſednelſe that he is abſolutly well pleaſed in himſelf, that he is without the reach of fear and danger, that none can impare it, none can match it, *I am God, and none elſe*, that is ſufficiency of delight to know himſelf, and his own

wn ſufficiency; Indeed man was made changeable, mu-
bly good that in this he might know God was above him,
nd ſo might have ground of watchful neſſe and depen-
ance upon him, for continuance of his happineſſe who
ade him happy: But being made ſo upright, no diſ-
uieting fear, nor perplexing care could trouble him.
hen laſtly, if you adde unto this holy ſatisfaction with
is own ſtate and freedom, the dominion and ſoveraignty
he had over the creatures, as a conſequent flowing from
that image, you may imagine what a happy creature He
was? Whatſoever contentment or ſatisfaction the crea-
tures could afford, all of them willingly and pleaſantly
would concurre to beſtow it upon man, with ut his care
or toyl, as if they had accounted it their happineſſe to ſerve
him, what more excellent then this order? Man counting
it his happineſſe and delight to ſerve God, and crea-
tures eſteeming it their happineſſe to ſerve man, all things
running towards him with all their goodneſſe, as to a
common center; And he returning all to God from
whence they did immediately flow: Thus beſides the
fulneſſe and riches of Gods goodneſs immediatly con-
ferred upon man, he was enriched with all the ſtore and
goodneſs that the earth was full of.

God having made man thus, and furniſhed him after
this manner, he gave him a Law, and then he made a
covenant with him, there was a Law firſt imprinted in-
to *Adam*, and then a Law preſcribed unto him, there
was a Law written in his heart, the remainder of which
Paul ſaith makes the Gentiles inexcuſeable, but it was per-
fectly drawn in him, all the principles and notions of good
and evil, were exactly drawn in it; he had a naturall
diſcerning of them, and a naturall inclination to all good,
and averſation from all evil: As there is a kinde of Law
Impoſed by God upon other creatures, which they con-
ſtantly keep, and do not ſwerve from, even his decree and
commandement, to the obedience of which they are com-
poſed and framed, the ſea hath a Law and command to

flow

flow and ebbe, and it is that command that breaks its proud waves on the ſand, when they threaten to overflow mountains, the beaſts obey a Law written in their natures of eating and drinking, of ſatisfying their ſenſes, and every one hath its ſeverall inſtinct and propenſion to ſeverall operations; So God gave a more noble inſtinct unto man, ſuteable to his reaſonable ſoul, an inſtinct and impulſe to pleaſe God, in ſuch duties of holineſs and righteouſneſs, a ſympathie with ſuch wayes of integrity and godlineſſe, and an innate antipathie againſt ſuch wayes as were diſpleaſing to him or diſhonourable to the creature: There is a kinde of comelineſſe and ſweet harmonie and proportion, between ſuch works as the love of God, and man, the uſe of all for his glory, of whom all things are, and mans reaſonable being, ſuch a thing doth ſute and become it, again other things, as the hatred of God and men, neglect and forgetfulneſſe of him, drunkenneſſe and abaſing luſts of that kinde, do diſſagree, and are undecent to it: O how happy was *Adam* when holineſſe and righteouſneſſe were not written on tables of ſtone, but on his heart, and when there was no need of externall perſwaſion, but there was an inward impulſe inclining him ſtrongly, and laying a kinde of ſweet neceſſity upon him, to that which was both his duty to God and men, and his own dignity and priviledge? This was no queſtion the very beauty of his ſoul, to be not only under a Law proper and peculiar to himſelf, but to be inwardly framed and moulded to it, to be a living law unto himſelf.

But beſides this inward imprinted Law of holineſſe and righteouſneſſe, which did without more rules direct him and determine to that which is in it ſelf good, it pleaſed the Lord to preſcribe and impoſe a poſitive Law unto him, to command him abſtinence from a thing neither good nor evil, but indifferent, and ſuch a thing as of it ſelf he might have done, as well as made uſe of any other creature, there was no difference between the fruit was diſ-

diſcharged him, and the fruit of the reſt of the garden, there was nothing in it did require abſtinence, and nothing in him either. Yet for moſt wiſe and holy ends the Lord enjoins him to abſtaine from that fruit, and puts an act of reſtraint upon him, to abridge his liberty in that which might prove his obedience, and not hinder his happineſſe, or diminiſh it; Becauſe he furniſhed him abundantly beſide. You may perceive two reaſons of it, one is that the ſoveraign power and dominion of God over all men may be more eminently held forth, and that viſibly in ſuch a ſymboll and ſign. He who put man in ſuch a well furniſhed houſe, and placed in ſuch a plentifull and fruitfull garden, reſerves one tree, *thou ſhalt not eat thereof*, to let *Adam* ſee and know that he is the ſoveraigne owner of all things and that his dominion over the creatures, and their ſervice unto him, was not ſo much for any naturall prerogative of man above them, as out of divine bounty and indulgence, becauſe he had choſen a creature to himſelf, to beautifie and make happy. This was a ſtanding viſible teſtimony to bring man continually to remembrance of his ſoveraignty, that being thus farre exalted above other creatures, he might know himſelf to be under his Creator, and that he was infinitely above him; That he might remember his own homage and ſubjection to God, when ever he looked upon his dominion over the creatures. And truely in other naturall duties which an inward principle and inſtinct drives unto, the ſuitableneſſe and conveniency or beauty of the thing, doth often preponderat, and might make man to obſerve them, without ſo much regard of the will and pleaſure of the moſt high; But in this the Lord would have no other reaſon of obedience to appear, but his own abſolute will and pleaſure to teach all men to conſider in their actings, rather the will of the commander, then the goodneſſe or uſe of the thing commanded. And then for this reaſon it was enjoined to make a more exact trial, and to take a more ample proof of *Adams* obedience. Oftentimes we

do

do things commanded of God, but upon what ground or motive? Becauſe our own intereſt lyes in them, becauſe there is an inward weight and *pondus* of affection preſſing us to them. The Lord commands the mutuall duties between Parents and Children, between Man and Wife, between friends duties of ſelf preſervation and defence, and ſuch like, and many are very exact and diligent in performing theſe; But from what principle its eaſie to diſcern, not becauſe they are commanded of God, not ſo much as a thought of that, for the moſt part, but becauſe of an inward and naturall inclination of affection towards our ſelves, and ourrelations, which is like an inſtinct and impulſe driving us to theſe duties, and truely we may ſay its the goodneſſe and bounty of the Lord, that hath conjoined in moſt parts of commanded duties our own intereſt and advantage, our own inclination and propenſion with his authority, or elſe the toil and pain of them would over-ballance the weight of his Authority. Now then in ſuch duties as are already imprinted on mans heart, and conſonant to his own reaſon, there cannot be a clear proof of obedience to God's will, the pure and naked nature of obedience doth not clearly ſhine forth in the obſervation of theſe, it is no great tryall of the creatures ſubjection of its will, to his ſupream will, when there are ſo many reaſons beſides his will, which may incline mans will unto it; But here in a matter [illegible] pleaſant to the ſenſes, unto which he had a naturall inclination the Lord interpoſes himſelf by a command of reſtraint, to take full probation whether man would ſubmit to his good pleaſure meerely for it ſelf, or whether he would obey meerely becauſe God commands: and indeed ſuch like duties as have no commendation but from the will and authority of the Law-giver, it will appeare whether mans obedience be pure and ſimple obedience, and whether men love obedience for it ſelf alone, or for other reaſons, therefore the Lord ſaith, obedience is better then ſacrifice, and diſobedience is rebellion, ſuppoſed

ſuch

ch things as can neither hurt us nor help us, God put restraint upon us, though obedience may be of lesse worth then in other more substantiall things, yet disobedience in such easie matters is most hainous, because it proclaims openly rebellion against God; if it be light and easie, it is more easily obeyed, and the more sin and wickednesse in disobeying; and therefore is *Adams* sin called disobedience in a signall manner, *Rom.* 5. because by refusing such a small point of homage and subjection, he did cast off Gods power and authority over him, and would not acknowledge him for his superiour. This should teach us who believe the repairing of that Image by Jesus Christ, to study such a respect and reverence to Gods holy will, as to do all things without more asking why it is so? If we once know what it is, there is no more question to be asked. Of creatures we must inquire a *quare*, after a *quid*, a *why*, after we know what their will is; But Christians should have their wills so subdued unto Gods, that though no profite nor advantage were to redound by obedience, though it were in things repugnant and crosse to our inclination and humor, yet we should serve and obey him, as a testimony of our homage and subjection to him; and till we learn this, and be more abstracted from our own interests in the wayes of obedience, even from the interests of peace, and comfort, and liberty, we do not obey him, because he commands, but for our own sakes. It is the practice of *Antinomians*, and contrare to true Godlinesse, to look upon the Law of God as the creatures bondage, as most of us do in our walkings; a Christian in whom that Image of God is renewed according to righteousnesse and holinesse, should esteem subjection and conformity to a Law, and to the will of God his only true liberty, yea the very beauty of the soul, and never is a soul advanced in conformity to God, till this be its delight, not a burden or task.

GAL. 3. 12. *The Law is not of faith, but the man that doth them ſhall live therein.*

GEN. 2. 17. *What day thou eats thereof thou ſhalt die.*

THe Lord made all things for himſelf, to ſhew forth the Glory of His Name, and man in a more eminent and ſpeciall manner, for more eminent manifeſtations of himſelf, therefore all his dealings towards men, whether righteous or ſinfull, do declare the glory of God. Particularly in reference to the preſent purpoſe, he reſolved to manifeſt two ſhining properties, His Soveraignty and Goodneſſe, His Soveraignty is ſhewed in giving out a Law and Command to the creature, and His Goodneſſe is manifeſted in making a Covenant with his creatures, as here you ſee the terms of a Covenant, a duty required, and a promiſe made, and incaſe of failing, a threatning conformed to the promiſe. He might have required obedience ſimply as the Lord and Soveraign owner of the being and operations of the creatures, and that was enough of obligation to bind all fleſh, that the Creator is Law-giver, that he who gives a being doth ſet bounds and limits to the exerciſe and uſe of that being; But it pleaſed the Lord in his infinite goodneſſe and love, to adde a promiſe and threatning to that Law and Command, and ſo turns it to the nature of a voluntary Covenant and agreement, whereby he doth mitigate and ſweeten his Authority and Power, and condeſcended ſo low to man as to take on himſelf a greater obligation then he puts upon man, *Do this and thou ſhalt live.* He might have out of his abſolutneſſe and power have required at the creatures hand any terms he pleaſed, even the hardeſt could be imagined, and yet no injuſtice in him, he might have put Laws on men to reſtrain all their naturall liberty, and in every thing to proclaim nothing but his

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own ſupremacy, but O what goodneſſe and condeſcenſion is evenin the very matter of the Law, and then in the manner of preſcibing it with a promiſe; In the matter ſo juſt and equitable to convince all mens conſciences, yea, even ingraven on their hearts, that he layes not many burdens on, but what mens conſciences muſt lay on themſelves, that there is nothing in it all when ſummed up harder then this, love God moſt of all, and thy neighbour as thy ſelf, which all men muſt proclaim to be due, though it had not been required; And but one precept added by his meer will, which yet was ſo eaſie a thing, as it was a wonder the Lord of all put no other conditions on the creature: And then for the manner, that it is propounded in Covenant-wiſe, with a promiſe, (not to expect the creatures conſent, for it did not depend on his acceptation, he being bound to accept any terms his Lord propounded) but becauſe the matter and all was ſo equitable, and the conditions ſo ample, that if it had been propounded to any rationall man, he would have conſented with an admiration at Gods goodneſſe: Indeed if we ſpeak ſtrictly, there cannot be a proper Covenant between God and man, there is ſuch an infinite diſtance between ſuch unequall parties, our obedience and performance being abſolutely in his power, we cannot promiſe in us our own, and it being but our duty, wee cannot crave or expect a reward in juſtice, neither can hee owe any thing to the creature; yet it pleaſed his Majeſty to propound it in theſe tearms, and to ſtoup ſo low unto mens capacities, and as it were come off the throne of his Soveraignity, both to require ſuch duties of men, and to promiſe unto them ſuch a free reward, and the reaſons of this may be plain upon Gods part, and upon ours, in ſuch dealing, He conſulted his own Glory, and mans good: His own Glory, I ſay, is manifeſted in it, and chiefly the Glory of his goodneſſe and love, that the moſt High comes down ſo low as to article with his own foot-ſtool, that he changes his abſolute right, into a moderat and

temperat Government, and tempers his lordly and cruel Monarchial power, by such a commixture of gentleness and goodnesse, in requiring nothing but what man behooved to call reasonable, and due; and in promising as much as no creature could challenge any tittle of. When the law was promulgat, *do this, Eat not of this Tree*, *Adams* conscience behooved to say, amen Lord, all is due, all the reason in the world for it, but when the promise is added, and the Trumpet sounds longer, thou shall live, O more then reason, more then is due must his conscience say, it was reason that the most high Lord should use his foot-stool as his foot-stool, and set his servant in the place of a servant, and so keep distance from him, but how strange is it that hee humbles himself to make freindship with man to assume him in a kindeo f familiarity and equality. And this Christ is not forgetfull of, when he restores men he puts them in all their former dignities, *I call you no servants, but friends:* Next his Wisdome doth appear in this, that when he had made a reasonable creature he takes a way of dealing suteable to its Nature, to bring forth willing and free obedience by the perswasion of such a reward, and the terrour of such a punishment: He most wisely did inclose the will of man as it were on both sides with hedges of punishment and reward, which might have been a sufficient defence or guard against all the irruptions of contrary perswasions, that man might continue in obedience, and that when hee went to the right hand or left, he might be keeped in by the hope of such an ample promise, and the fear of such a dreadfull threatning. But then the righteousnes of God doth appear in this, for there is nothing doth more illustrat the justice of the Judge, then when the Malefactor hath before consented to such a punishment incase of transgression; when the Law is confirmed by the consent and approbation of man, now he has man subscribing already to his judgement, and so all the world must stop their mouth and become guilty incase of transgression of such a righteous command after such warning. But

But in the next place, its no leſſe for mans good, what honour and dignity was put upon man when he was taken into friendſhip with God? To be in covenant of friendſhip with a King, O what a dignity is it accounted? and ſome do account it a great priviledge to be in company and converſe with ſome eminent and great Perſon. but may not man ſay with the Pſalmiſt. 8. *Lord what is man that thou art ſo mindfull of him, or the Sonne of man that thou viſites him*; and makes a covenant of friendſhip and ſafe with him? Again, what way more fit and ſuteable to ſtir up and conſtrain *Adam* unto a willing and conſtant obedience? When he had the incouragement of ſuch a gracious reward, and the determent of ſuch a fearfull puniſhment, between theſe two banks might the ſilver ſtreams of obedience have run for ever without breaking over. He was bound to all, though nothing had been promiſed, but then to have ſuch a hope, what Spirit might it adde to him? The Lord had been free upon mans obedience either to continue him his happy eſtate, or, to denude him of it, or to annihilat him, there was no obligation lying on him; but now what confirmation might man have by looking upon the certain recompence of reward? When God brings himſelf freely under an Obligation of a Promiſe, and ſo aſcertains it to his ſoul which he could never have dreamed off, and gives him liberty to challenge him upon his faithfulneſſe to perform it. And then laſtly, there was no way ſo fit to commend God, and ſweeten him unto his ſoul as this. *Adam* knew that his goodneſs could not extend to God, that his righteouſneſſe could not help him, nor his wickedneſſe hurt him, and ſo could expect nothing from his exact obedience, but now when Gods goodneſſe doth ſo overflow unto the Creature, and the Lord takes pleaſure to communicate Himſelf to make others happy, though he had need of none, O how muſt it ingadge the heart of man to a delightful remembrance, and converſe with that God? As his authority would Imprint reverence, ſo his goodneſſe

thus manifested would ingrave confidence, and thus the life of man was not only a life of obedience, but a life of pleasure and delight, not only a holy but a happy life, yea happy in holinesse.

Now as it was *Pauls* great businesse in preaching, to rid marches between the Covenant of grace, and the Covenant of works, to take men off that old broken ship to this sure plank of grace that is offered by Jesus Christ to drowning soules; So it would be our great work to shew unto you the nature of this Covenant, and the terms thereof, that you may henceforth finde and know that salvation to be now impossible by the Law, which so many seek in it; We have no earand to speak of the first *Adam*, but the better to lead you to the second, our life was once in the first, but he lost himself and us both, but the second by losing himself saves both. We have nothing adoe to speak of the first covenant, but that we may lead you or persue yow rather to the second, established upon better tearms and better promises.

The tearms of this Covenant are, *do this and live*, perfect obedience without one jot of failing or falling, an intire and universall accomplishment of the whole will of God, that is the duty required of man, there is no latitude left in the bargain to admite endeavours, in stead of performance, or desire in stead of duty, there is no place for Repentance here, if a man fall in one point, he falls from the whole promise, by the tenor of this bargain there is no hope of recoverie. If you would have the duty in a word, its a love of God with all our heart and soul and our neighbour as our self, and that testified and verified in all duties and offices of obedience to God, and love to men, without the least mixture of sin and infirmitie. Now the promise on Gods part is indeed larger then that duty, not only because undeserved, but even in the matter of it, its so abundant, life, Eternall life, continuance in a happy estate. There is a threatning added, *in what day thou eats thou shall die*, that is, thou shall become a mortall

and

nd miſerable creature, ſubject to miſery here and here-
ter, which is more preſſingly ſet down in that word,
Curſed is he that abides not in all things written in the Law to
o them. It is very peremptor, that men dream not of
ſcaping wrath, when they break but in one, ſuppoſe
hey did abide in all the reſt. Curſed is every man from
he higheſt to the loweſt, the Lord Almighty is engaged a-
ginſt him, his countenance his power is againſt him to
deſtroy him and make him miſerable; Who ever doth
fall but in one jot of the commands, he ſhall not only
fall from that bleſſed condition freely promiſed, but
loſe all that he already poſſeſed, fall from that image of
God, dominion over the creatures, and incurre in ſtead
of that poſſeſſed and expected happineſſe, miſery here on
ſoul and body, in pains, ſickneſſes, troubles, griefs, *&c.*
And Eternall miſery on both without meaſure hereafter.
Eternall deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord and the glory
of His power.

Now *this Law is not of Faith*, ſaith the Apoſtle: This
opens up the nature of the bargain, and the oppoſition
between the preſent Covenant and that which is made
with loſt ſinners in a Mediator. This Covenant is cal-
led of works, *do this and live*, to him that worketh is the
Promiſe made, though freely too. It is grace that once
a reward ſhould be promiſed to obedience, but having
once reſolved to give it, herein juſtice appears in an equall
and uniform diſtribution of the reward, according to
works; So that where there is an equalitie of works there
ſhall be an equalitie of reward, and no difference put be-
tween perſons equall: which is the very freedom of the
Covenant of grace that it paſſes over all ſuch conſiderati-
ons, and deals equally in mercy with unequall ſinners, and
unequally it may be with them, that are equall in nature.

You may aſk, was not *Adam* to beleeve in God, and
did not the Law require faith? I anſwer Chriſt diſtin-
guiſhes a two-fold faith, you beleeve in God, beleeve al-
ſo in me. No queſtion he was called to beleeve in God

he

the Creator, of the world, and that in a three-fold consideration.

First to depend on God the self-being and fountain good, his own goodneſſe was but a fluxe and emanation from that Sun of righteouſneſſe, and ſo was to be perpetuated by conſtant abiding in his ſight, the interpoſition of mans ſelf between him and God, did ſoon bring on this Eternall night of darkneſſe. Nature might have taught him to live in him in whom he had life and being and motion, and to forget and look over his own perfections as evanithing ſhaddows; But this quickly extinguiſhed his life, when he began to live in himſelf.

Next he was obliged to beleeve Gods word, both threatning and promiſe, and to have theſe conſtantly in his view, and certainly if he had kept in his ſerious conſideration the ineſtimable bleſſing of life promiſed, and the fearfull curſe of death threatened, if he had not been induced firſt to doubt, and then to denie the truth and reality of theſe, He had not attemped ſuch a deſparate rebellion againſt the Lord.

Then thirdly he was to beleeve and perſwade himſelf of the Lords fatherly love, and that the Lord was well pleaſed with his obedience, and this faith would certainly beget much peace and quietneſſe in his mind, and alſo conſtran him to love him, and live to him who loved him, and gave him life and happineſſe out of love; yet this holds true that the Apoſtle ſaith, *the Law is not of Faith*, to wit, in a Mediator and Redeemer, it was a bond of immediat friendſhip, there needed none to mediat between God and man, there needed no reconciler where there was no odds nor diſtance: But the Goſpel is of Faith in a Mediator, its the ſoul plighting its hope upon Jeſus Chriſt in its deſparate neceſſity, and ſo ſuppoſes man ſinfull and miſerable in himſelf, and in his own ſenſe too, and ſo putting over his weight and burden upon

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one whom God hath made mighty to save: The Law is not of Faith, but of perfect works, a watch-word brought in of purpose to bring men off their hankering after a broken and desperate Covenant; It admits no repentance, it speaks of no pardon, it declares no Cationer or Redeemer, there is nothing to be expected according to the tenor of that Covenant, but wrath from Heaven, either personall obedience in all, or personall punishment for ever, that is the very terms of it, and it knows no other thing. Either bring compleat righteousnesse and holinesse to the promise of life, or expect nothing but death.

This may be a sad Meditation to us to stand and look back to our former estate, and compare it with that into which we are fallen, that image we spoke of is defaced and blotted out, which was the glory of the Creation, and now there is nothing so monstrous, so deformed in the world as man, the corruption of the best thing is alwayes worst, the ruines of the most noble creature, are most ruinous, the spot of the soul most abominable, we are nothing but a masse of darknesse, ignorance, error, inordinate lust, nothing but confusion, disorder, and distempers in the soul, and in the conversation of men, and in summe, that blessed bond of friendship with God broken, discord and enimitie entered upon our side, and separated us from God, and so we can expect nothing from that first Covenant, but the curse and wrath threatened: By one mans disobedience sin entered upon all, and death by sin, because in that agreement *Adam* was a common person representing us, and thus are all men once subject to Gods judgement, and come short of the glory of God, fallen from life into a state of death, and for any thing could be expected, irrevocably. But it hath pleased the Lord in his infinit mercy, to make a better covenant in Christ his Son, that what was impossible to the law, by reason of our weakenes and wickednesse, his son sent in the flesh

condemned

condemned for sin might accopmlish, *Rom.* 8. 3. There is some comfort yet after this, that covenant was not last, and that sentence was not irrevocable, he maks a new transactione, lays the iniquity of his elect upon Christ, and puts the curse upon his shoulders which was due to them, justice cannot admit the abrogation of the law, but mercy pleads for a temperatment of it, and thus the Lord dispenses, with personall satisfaction, which in rigour he might have craved, and finds out a ransome, admits anothers satisfaction in their name, and in the name of that Cationer and Redeemer is salvation preached upon better tearms, *beleeve and thou shall be saved, Rom.* 10. Thou lost and undone sinner whoever thou art, that finds thy self guilty before God, and that thou cannot stand in judgement by the former Covenant, thou who hast no personall righteousnesse and trusts in none, come here, imbrace the righteousnesse of thy cationer, receive him and rest on him and thou shall be saved.

ECCLES. 7. 29. *God made man upright, but he sought out many inventions.*

THe one half of true religion consists in the knowledge of our self, the other half in the knowledge of God, and what ever besids this men study to know and apply there hearts unto, its vaine and impertinent, and like medling in other mens matters, neglecting our own, if we do not give our selves to the search of these. All of us must needs grant this in the generall that it is an idle and improfitable wandering abroad to be carried forth to the knowledge and use of other things, and in the mean time to be strangers to our selves with whom we should be most acquainted,

ted. If any man was diligent and earneſt in the enquirie and uſe of the things in the world, *Solomon* was, he applied his heart to ſeek out wiſedom, and what ſatisfaction was in the knowledge of all things naturall, and in this he attained a great degree beyond all other men, yet he pronounces of it all after experience and triall, *that this alſo was vanity and vexation of ſpirit*, not only empty and unprofitable, and not conducing to that true bleſſedneſſe be ſought after, but hurtfull and deſtructive, nothing but griefe and ſorrow in it. After he had proved all with a reſolution to be wiſe, yet it was far from him, *I ſaid I will be wiſe, but it was far from me*, v. 23. And therefore after long wandering abroad, he returns at length home to himſelf, to know the eſtate of mankind, *Lo this only have I found, &c.* v. 29. When I have ſearched all other things and found many things by ſearch, yet (ſayes hee) what doth it all concern me; when I am ignorant of my ſelf, there is one thing concernes me more then all, to know the originall of man, what he once was made, and to know how far hee is departed from his Original, this only I have found profitable to men, and as the entry and preparation to that bleſſedneſſe I inquire for, to have the true diſcovery of our miſery.

There are two things then concerning man that have to ſearch and to know, and that not in a trifling or curious manner, as if you had no other end in it, but to know it, as men do in other things, but in a ſerious and earneſt way, as in a matter of ſo much concernment to our Eternal welbeing. In things that relate particularly to our ſelves, wee labour to know them for ſome advantage, beſide the knowing of them, even though they be but ſmall and lower things; How much more ſhould we propoſe this unto our ſelves in the ſearch and examination of our own eſtate, not meerly to know ſuch a thing, but to know it that we may be ſtirred up and provocked in the ſenſe of it, to look after the remedy that God holds forth. There are two things that you have to know, what man once

was

was made, and how he is now unmade, how happy once, and how miſerable now? And anſwerable to theſe two are the Branches of the Text, *God made man upright*, that he was once, *and they have ſought out many inventions*, not being contented with that bleſſedneſſe they were created into, by catching at a higher eſtate of wiſedom, have fallen down into a gulf of miſery, as the man that gazed on the ſtars above him, and did not take notice of the pit under his feet till he fell into it, and thus man is now. So you have a ſhort account of the two eſtates of men, of the eſtate of grace and righteouſneſſe without ſin, and the eſtate of ſin and miſery without grace: you have the true ſtory of man from the Creation unto his preſent condition: But all the matter is, to have the lively ſenſe of this upon our hearts, I had rather that wee went home bewailing our loſſe, and lamenting our miſery, and longing for the recovery of that bleſſedneſſe, then that wee went out with the exact memory of all that is ſpoken, and could repeat it again.

God made man upright: At his firſt moulding the Lord ſhewed excellent art, and wiſdome, and goodneſſe too; man did come forth from under his hand in the firſt edition very glorious, to ſhew what he could do, upright, that is, all right and very exactly conformed to the noble and high pattern, endowed with divine wiſdome, ſuch as might direct him to true happineſſe, and furniſhed with a divine willingneſſe to follow that direction, the command was not above his head as a rod, but within his heart as a naturall inſtinct, all that was within him was comely and beautiful, for that glorious light that ſhined upon him, having life and love with it, produced a ſweet harmony in the ſoul, he knew his duty, and loved it, and was able to perform it. O! how much is in this one word? *Upright*, not only ſincerity and integrity in the ſoul, but perfection of all the degrees and parts, no part of holineſſe wanting, and no meaſure of theſe parts, no mixture of darkneſſe or ignorance, no mixture of indiſpo-

ſition

ſition or unwillingneſſe, godlineſſe was ſweet and not laborious, the love of God poſſeſſing the heart, did conformall within and without to the will of God, and O how beautifull was that conformity, and that love of God the fountain-being, did ſend forth as a ſtream love and goodwill to all things, as they did partake of Gods Image, and ſo holineſſe towards God did beget righteouſneſſe towards men, and made men to partake of one anothers happineſſe.

This is a ſurvey of him in his integrity as God made him, but there follows a ſad *but*, a ſad and wofull exception: *But they have ſought out many inventions.* Wee cannot look upon that glorious eſtate whereinto man was made, but ſtraight way we muſt turn our eyes upon that miſery into which he hath plunged himſelf, and be the more affected with it, that it was once otherwiſe. It is miſery in a high degree to have been once happy, this moſt of all agredges our miſery, and may increaſe the ſenſe of it, that ſuch man once was, and ſuch we might have been, if we had not deſtroyed our ſelves. Who can look upon theſe ruines and refrain mourning? Its ſaid, that theſe who ſaw the glory of the firſt Temple weeped when they beheld the ſecond, becauſe it was not anſwerable to it in magnificence and glory; So, I ſay, it might occaſion much ſadneſſe and griet even to the children of God, in whom that Image is imparted, and that by a ſecond Creation, to think how much more happy and bleſſed man once was, who had grace and holineſſe without ſin. But certainly it ſhould and muſt be at firſt before this Image be reſtored, the bitter lamentation of a ſoul, to look upon it ſelf wholly ruinous and defaced, in the view of that glorious ſtately fabrick which once was made; how lamentable a ſight is it to behold the firſt Temple demoliſhed, or the firſt creation defaced, and the ſecond not yet begun in many ſouls, the foundation ſtone not yet laid. It was a ſad and dolefull invention which Satan inſpired at firſt into mans heart, to go about to find out another happi-

neſs

neſſe, to ſeek how to be wiſe as God, an invention that did proceed from hell, how to know evill experimentally and practically by doing it; that invention hath invented and found out all the ſin and miſery under which the world groans. It is a poor invention to deviſe miſery and torment to the creature, this was the hight of folly and madneſſe, for a happy creature to invent how to make it ſelf miſerable, and all others. Indeed he intended another thing, to be more happy, but pride and ambition got a deſerved fall, the reſult of all is, ſin and miſery.

And now from this firſt devilliſh invention the heart of man is poſſeſſed with a multitude of vain imaginations. Man is now become vain in his imaginations, and his fooliſh heart is darkened, that divine wiſdome he was endowed with all is eclipſed, for it was a ray of Gods countenance, and now he is left wholly in the dark, without a guide, without a directer or leader, he is turned out of the path of holineſſe, and ſo of happineſs; a night of groſs darkneſs and blindneſs is come on, and the way is full of pits and ſnares, and the end of it is at beſt eternall miſery, and there is no lamp, no light to ſhine in it, to ſhew him either the miſery that he is poſting unto, or the happineſſe he is fleeing from: there is nothing within him ſufficient to direct his way to bleſſedneſſe, and nothing willing nor able to follow ſuch a direction. And thus man is left to the invention and counſel of his own deſperatly wicked and deceitfull heart, and that is above all plagues to be given up to a reprobat mind: He is now left to ſuch a tutor and guider, and it is full of inventions indeed, but they are all in vain, that is all of them unſufficient for this great purpoſe, all of them cannot make one hair that is black, white, much leſſe redeem the ſoul, but beſides, they are deſtructive, they pretend to deliver, but they deſtroy, a deſparat wicked heart imagineth evill continually, evil againſt God, and evill to our own ſouls, and a deceitfull heart ſmooths over the evill, and preſents it under another notion, and ſo under pretence of a friend,

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is the greatest enemy a man hath, a bosome enemy. All mens inventions, thoughts, cogitations, projects, and endeavours, what do they tend to, but to the satisfaction of their lusts, either the lusts of the mind, as ambition, pride, avarice, passion, revenge, and such like, or the lusts of the body, as pleasure to the ears, and to the eyes, and to the flesh. Man was made with an upright soul, with a dominion over that brutish part, more like Angels, but now all his invention runs upon that base and beastly part how to adorn it, how to beautifie it, how to satisfie it, and for this the soul must be a drudge and slave: And if men rise up to any thoughts of a higher life, yet what is it for, but to magnifie and exalt the flesh to seek an excellency within which is lost, and so to satisfie the pride and self-love of the heart. If any man comes this length as to apprehend some misery, yet how vain are his inventions about the remedy of it, not knowing how desperat the disease is, men seek help in themselves, and think by industry, and care, and art, to raise themselves up in some measure, and please God by some expiations or sacrifices of their own works, now this tends to no other purpose, but to satisfie the lust of mans pride, and so it increases that which was mens first maladie, and keeps them from the true Physician. In a word, all mans inventions are to hasten misery on him, or to blind-fold himself till it come on, all his invention cannot reach a deliverie from this misery: Let us therefore consider this which Solomon hath found out, and if we carefully consider it and accurately ponder it in relation to our own souls, then have we also found it with him. Consider I say what man once was and what you are now, and bevaill your misery and the fountaine of it, our departure from the fountaine of life and blessednes: know what you are, not only weak, but wicked, whose Art and power lies onely in wickedness skilfull and able onely to make your selves miserable, and let this consideration make you cast away all your confidence in your selves, and carry you forth to a Redeem-

er,

er, who hath found a ranſome, who hath found out an excellent invention to cure all our diſtempers and diſperat diſeales. The counſell of the holy Trinitie that meet about (if I may ſpeake ſo) our creation in holineſs and righteouſneſs after his own image, that ſame hath conſulted about the reſt of it, and hath found out this courſe that one of them ſhall be made after mans image, and for this purpoſe that he may reſtore again Gods Image unto us: O bleſs this deep invention and happy contrivance of Heaven, that could never have bred in any breſt but in the depths of eternall wiſdome, and let us abandon and forſake our own vain imaginations and fooliſh inventions, let us become fools in our own eyes, that we may become wiſe. Man by ſeeking to be wiſe, became a foole, that was ane unhappy invention; now its turned contrary, let all men take with their follie and diſperat wickedneſs, Let not the vaine thoughts and dreames of our own well-being and ſufficiency lodge within us, and we ſhall be made wiſe, come to the Fathers wiſdome, unto Jeſus Chriſt who is that bleſſed invention of Heaven for our remedie. *How long ſhall vaine thoughts lodge within you?* O when will you be waſhed from them, how long ſhall not your thoughts tranſcend this temporall and bodily life? How long did you imagine to live in ſin and die in the Lord, to continue in ſinne and eſcape wrath? Why do ye delude your ſouls with a dreame of having intereſt in the love of God, and purchaſſing his favour by your works? Theſe are ſome of theſe many inventions man hath ſought out.

ROM. 5. 12. *Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death past upon all men, for that all have sinned.*

THis is a sad subject to speak upon, yet it is not more sad then usefull, though it be unpleasant to hold out a glasse to men, to see their own vile faces into, yet is it profitable, yea, and so necessarie, that till once a soul apprehend its broken and desolate condition in the first *Adam*, it can never heartily imbrace and come to the second *Adam*. You have here the woefull and dreadfull effects and consequents of the first transgression upon all mankind, the effect is two-fold, sin and misery, or sin and death, the subject is universall in both, all men, the whole world. Behold what a flood of calamity hath entered at a small crannie, By one mans transgression? May it not be said of sin in generall, which the wise man speaks of strife, the beginning of sin is as when one lets out water, therefore it had been good leaving it off before it had been medled with, it entered at a small hole but it hath overflowed a whole world since.

That which first occurres, is, that all mankind proceeding from *Adam* by ordinary birth are involved in sin by *Adams* transgression. But that may seem a hard saying, that sin and death should flow unto the whole posterity who had no accession to *Adams* transgression. It would seem that every man should die for his own iniquity and that it should reach no further in Justice. But consider I pray, you the relation that *Adam* stood into, and in which he is here holden out as a figure of Christ. *Adam* the first man was a common person representing all mankind, in whose happinesse or misery all should share;

God contracts with him on these terms, that his poste-
rities estate should depend on his behaviour. Now if a
mankinde would have reaped the benefite and advanta-
of *Adams* perseverance, if such an undeserved reward o
eternall life would have redounded by the free promise un
to them all, what Iniquity is it that they also be share
in his misery, our stock and treasure was ventered in th
vessel, and if we were to partake of its gain, why not o
its losse; You see among men, children have one com-
mon lot with their parents, if the father be fore-faulted, th
heirs suffer in it, and are cast out of the inheritance: I
might appear a surer way to have the fortunes of all (
to speak) depend upon one, and their happinesse assure
unto them upon the standing of one, then to have ever
one left unto himself, and his own well-being dependin
upon his own standing, as it is more likely one, an
that the first one shall not sin, then many, and especiall
when that one knew that the weight of all his posterity
hung upon him, it might have made him very circum-
spect, knowing of how great moment his carriage was
but certainly we must look a little higher then such
reasons, there was a glorious purpose of Gods predo-
minant in this, else there was no naturall necessitie o
imputing *Adams* sin to the children not yet born, or pro-
pagating it to the children; He that brought a holy
one and undefiled out of a Virgin who was defiled, could
have brought all others clean out of unclean parents, but
there is a higher counsell about it, the Lord would have
all men subject to his judgement, all men once guilty,
once in an equall state of misery, to illustrat that speci-
all grace shewed in Christ the more, and demonstrat
his power and wrath upon others. That which con-
cerns us most is to beleeve this, that sin hath overspread
all, and to have the lively impression of this were of
more moment to true Religion, then many discour-
ses upon it. I had rather ye went home not cursing
Adam, or murmuring against the most High, but
bemoaning

moaning your selves for your wretched estate, then e able to give reasons for the generall imputation and ropagation of sin. Ye all see it is, and therefore ou would rather mourn for it, then ask why is?

There is sin entered into the world by imputation, nd also by propagation. *Adams* first sin and hainous ransgression, is charged upon all his posterity, and im-uted unto them, even unto them *who have not sinned cording to the similitude of* Adams *transgression*, that is, ctually as he did. Infants whom you call innocents and indeed so they are in resp. & of you who are ome to age) yet they are guilty before God of that in that ruined all. Now that you may know what you re and what little reason you have to be pleased with your selves, and absolve your selves as ye do, I shall nbowell that iniquity unto you. First, there was in it, n open banner displayed against God: When the so-eraign Lord had enjoined his creature such a testimony f his homage and loyalty, and that so easie to be per-formed, and such as not a whit could abate from his hap-pinesse, what open rebellion was it to refuse it? it was casting off the soveraign dominion of God, then which nothing can be more hainous, as if the clay should re-fuse to serve the potters pleasure, and therefore its eminent-y and signally stiled disobedience, as having nothing in t but the pure naked nature of disobedience, no difficulty o excuse it, for it was most easie; no pleasure to plead for it, for there were as good fruit beside, and a world of them; No necessity to extenuate it, so that you can see nothing in it, but the ugly face of disobedience and rebel-lion, *vers.* 19. Whereby man draweth himself from his allegeance due to his Maker, and shaketh off the yoke in reproach of the most High. Next you may behold the vile and abominable face of ingratitude and unthankfull-nesse in it, and truely heathens have so abhorred unthank-fulnesse towards men that they could not digest the reproach

of it. *Ingratum si dixeris, omnia dixeris* : If you call m
unthankfull, you may call me any thing, or all thing
its a compend of all vices; Its even iniquity grown
maturity and ripeneſſe: but that ſuch a fruit ſhould grow o
of ſuch a holy and good ſoil, ſo well dreſſed and manured b
the Lord, was a wonder. *Lord what was man that th
ſo magnified him, and made him a little lower then the A
gels?* That thou put all things ſublunarie, under h
feet, and exalted him above them. For that creatu
choſen and ſelected from among all, to be his minion,
ſtand in his preſence, adorned and beautified with ſuc
gifts and graces, magnified with ſuch glorious priv
ledges, made according to the moſt excellent pa
tern, His *own Image*, to forget all, and forget ſ
ſoon, and when he had ſuch a ſpacious Garden to mak
uſe of (as is ſuppoſed to make up the third part of th
earth) to eat of no fruit but that which was forbidden
there is no ſuch monſtrous ingratitude can be imagine
as here was acted. But then conſider the two fountain
from which this flowed, unbeleef and pride, and ye ſha
finde it the heavieſt ſin in the world, unbeleef of his wor
and threatening, firſt he was brought to queſtion it an
doubt of it, and then to deny it. A word ſo ſolemn
and particularly told him by the truth it ſelf, that eve
a queſtion of it could ariſe in his mind or get entry, wha
elſe was it then to imput iniquity to the holy one? An
that iniquity of falſhood and lying, which his nature moſ
abhorres? What was it to blaſpheme the moſt hig
and faithfull God, by harkening to the ſuggeſtions of h
enemy, and credit them more then the threatenings o
God? To give the very flat contradiction to God, w
ſhall not die, and to aſſent ſo heartily to Satans ſlanders an
reproaches of God. And this unbeleef opened a door t
ambition and pride, the moſt ſacrilegious ingredient of al
which is moſt oppoſit to God, and unto which he mo
oppoſed himſelf from the beginning. *You ſhall be lik
gods*: Was he not happy enough already, and accordin
to Gods Image? Nay, but this evill principle woul
ariſ

rise up to the Throne of God and sit down in his stead. Pride hath atheisme in it, to deny the true God, and yet would be a god it self. For the foot-stool to lift up it self thus, what an indignity was it, and indeed this wretched sinne at so high an estate hath thrown us down as low as hell. You see then how injurious this transgression was to God. There was disobedience and rebellion in it, which denies his dominion and supremacy, there was unthankfulneſſe, in it denying his goodneſſe and bounty, there was unbeleef in it contradicting His truth and faithfullneſſe, and finally pride opposing it self to all that is in God, reaching up to his very crown of Majesty to take it off. You see then what you are guilty of in being guilty of *Adams* transgression, many of you flatters your selves in your own eyes, that ye have not done much evill, and ye will justify your selves in your comparisons with others? but *I* beseech you consider this, though you had never done personally good or evill, here that which drowned the world in misery is your sin, and charged upon you, you are guilty of that which ruined all mankind, and makes the Creation subject to vanity and corruption. O if ye beleeved this, ye would find more need of the second *Adam* then ye do, O how precious would his righteousneſſe and obedience be to you, if ye had rightly apprehended your interest in the first mans disobedience.

But besides this imputation there is much more propagated unto all, and that is a totall corruption and depravation of nature in soul and body, whereby man is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is truly and spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually, which is commonly called Originall sin: a totall averſneſſe from God, and from all goodneſſe, an antipathy against these wayes of holineſſe, and a propension and strong impulse towards evill, even as a stone moves downward: This poyson and contagion of sin entering into the world, hath infected

all, and gone through all the members; neither is it any wonder it be so, when this leprosie hath defiled the walls and roof of the house, I mean, hath made the Creation subject to vanity and corruption, it is no wonder that it spread abroad in his issue, and make all unclean like himself: And truly this is it which most abases mans nature, and being seen, would most humble men; yea, till this be discerned no man can be indeed humbled, he will never apprehend himself so bad as he is, but still imagine some excellency in himself, till he see himself in this glasse: you talk of good natures, and good dispositions, *but in our flesh* (saith the Apostle) *dwels no good thing*, the seeds of all wickednesse are in every one of us, and its the goodnesse of God for preserving of humane society, that they are restrained and keept down in any from the grossest out-breakings. They know not themselves who know any good of themselves, and they know not themselves who either are in admiration at, or in bitternesse or contempt against other sinners, whose sins are manifest to all. This were the only way to profite by looking on others evils, if we could straight way retire within and behold the root of that in our selves, the fountain of it within us, and so grow in loathing not of these persons, but of humane nature, and in sutable thoughts of our selves and others, and might wonder at the goodnesse and undeserved bounty of the Lord that passes an act of restraint upon our corruption, and dammes it up. Oh that we could learn to loath our selves in other mens evils, thus we might reap good out of the evill, and prevent more in our selves: But the looking upon grosse provocations as singularities, make them more generall, because every man does not charge himself with the corruption that is in all these, but prefers himself to another, therefore are reins loosed to corruption, and a sluce opened, that it may come out, that he who would not see his own image in anothers face, may behold it in the glasse of his own abominations. There is no point lesse believed then this, though

ough generally confeſſed that man is dead in ſins and ſpaſſes, and impotent to help himſelf. You will hard- take with wickednesſe when you confeſſe weakneſſe, as nature were only ſick, but not dead, hurt, but not kil- ed; therefore it is that ſo many do abide in themſelves, nd truſting to their own good purpoſes, and reſolutions, nd endeavours, do think to pacifie God, and help them- ſelves out of their miſery. But, O look again, and ook in upon your ſelves in the glaſs of the Word, and there is no doubt but you will ſtraight way be filled with con- fuſion of face, and be altogether ſpoiled of good confi- dence and hope, as you call it: you will find your ſelf plunged in a pit of miſery, and all ſtrength gone, and none on the right hand or the left to help you, and then, and not till then, will the ſecond *Adams* hand ſtretched out for help be ſeaſonable.

That which next follows is that which is the companion of ſin inſeparably, *death hath paſt upon all*, and that by ſin. *Adams* one diſobedience opened a port for all ſin to enter upon mankind, and ſin cannot enter without this compa- nion death. Sin goes before, and death follows on the back of it, and theſe ſute one another, as the work and the wages, as the tree and the fruit, they have a ſibneſs one to another, ſowing to corruption reaps an anſwerable harveſt, to wit, corruption: Sowing to the wind, and reaping the whirle-wind, how ſuteable are they. That men may know how evill and bitter a thing ſin is, he makes this the fruit of it, in his firſt Law and function given out to men, he joynes them inſeparably, ſin and death, ſin and wrath, ſin and a curſe.

By death is not only meant bodily death, which is the ſeparation of the ſoul from the body, but firſt the ſpirituall death of the ſoul, conſiſting in a ſeparation of the ſoul from Gods bleſſed enlightening, enlivening and comfort- ing countenance: Mans true life wherein he differs from beaſts, conſiſts in the right aſpect of God upon his ſoul, in his walking with God, and keeping communion with

him;

him; all things besides this are but common and base; and this was cut off: His comfort, his joy and peace in God extinct, God became terrible to his conscience; and therefore man did flee and was afraid when he heard his voice in the Garden. Sin being interposed between God and the soul, cut off all the influence of Heaven: Hence arises darkness of mind, hardness of heart, delusions, vile affections, horrours of conscience. Look what difference is between a living creature and a dead carcasse, so much is between *Adams* soul upright, living in God, and *Adams* soul separated from God by sin. Then upon the outward man the curse redounds, the body becomes mortall which had been incorruptible, its now like a besiedged City, now some utter Forts are gained by diseases, now by pains and torments, the outward walls of the body are at length overcome, and when life hath fled into a Castle within the City, the heart, that is at last of all besiedged so strakly, and stormed so violently, that it must render unto death, upon any tearms, the body of man is even a seminary of a world of diseases and grievances, that if men could look upon it aright, they might see the sentence of death every day performed. Then how many evils in estate, in friends, and relations, in imployments, which being considered by Heathens, hath made them praise the dead more then the living, but him not yet born most of all, because the present life is nothing else but a valley of misery and tears, a sea of troubles, where one wave continually prevents another, and comes on like *Iobs* messengers, before one speak out his wofull tydings, another comes with such like, or worse. But that which is the summe and accomplishment of Gods curse and mans misery, is that death to come, eternall death, not death simply, but *an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power*: An infinite losse, because the losse of such a glorious life in the enjoyment of Gods presence; and an infinite hurt and torment beside, and both eternall. Now this is that we

would

would lay before you: you are under ſuch an heavy ſentence from the womb, a ſentence of the Almighty adjudging you for *Adams* guilt, and your own, to all the miſery in this world, and the next; to all the treaſures of wrath that are heaped up againſt the day of wrath; and ſtrange it is how we can live in peace; and not be troubled in mind, who have ſo great and formidable a party. Be perſwaded, O be perſwaded that there ſhall not one jot of this be removed, it muſt be fulfilled in you or your Cautioner, and why then is a Saviour offered, a City of refuge opened, and ſecure ſinners will not flee into it. But as for as many as have the inward dreadfull apprehenſion of this wrath to come, and knows not what to do, know that to you is Jeſus Chriſt Preached, the ſecond *Adam* a quickening Spirit, and in that conſideration better then the firſt, not only a living ſoul himſelf, but a ſpirit to quicken you who are dead in ſins, one that hath undertaken for you and will hold you faſt: *Adam* who ſhould have kept us, loſt himſelf, Chriſt in a manner loſt himſelf to ſave us: And as by *Adams* diſobedience all this ſin and miſery hath abounded on man, know that the ſecond *Adam* his obedience and righteouſneſſe is of greater vertue and efficacy to ſave, and in ſtead of ſin to reſtore righteouſneſſe, and in ſtead of death to give life, therefore you may come to him and you ſhall be more ſurely keept then before.

1 Tim. 1. 15. *This is a faithfull saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came in the world to save sinners.*

OF all Doctrines that ever were published to men, this contained here is the choiseſt, as you see the very preface prefixed to it imports; And truly, as it is the moſt excellent in it self, it could not but be sweet unto us, if we had received into the heart the belief of our own wretchednesse and misery. I do not know a more soveraign cordiall for a fainting soul, then this faithfull saying, *That Iesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*, And therefore we are moſt willing to dwell on this subject, and to inculcate it often upon you, that without Him you are undone and loſt, and in Him you may be saved. I professe all other subjects (howsoever they might be more pleasing to some hearers) are unpleasant and unsavoury to me. This is that we would once learn and ever be learning to know Him that came to save us, and come to Him.

We laboured to shew unto you the state of sin and misery that *Adams* firſt transgression hath subjected all mankind unto, which if it were really and truly apprehended, I do not think but it would make this saying welcome to your souls. Man being plunged into such a deep pit of misery, sin and death having overflowed the whole world, and this beeing seen and acknowledged by a sinner, certainly the next question in order of nature is this, hath God left all to perish in this estate, is there any remedy provided for sin and misery? And this will be indeed the queſtie of a self-condemned sinner. Now there is a plank after this broken ship, there is an answer sweet and satisfactorie to this question, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

We shall not expatiat into many notions about this, or mukiply

multiply many branches of this. The matter is plain and ſimple, and we deſire to hold it out plainly and ſimply, that this is the remedy of ſin and miſery. When none could be found on the right hand or left hand. Hear a Saviour from Heaven, come down from above, whence no good could be expected, becauſe a good God was provoked. Can any good come out of Nazareth, that was a proverb concerning him. But I think in ſome ſenſe it might be ſaid, can any good come down from Heaven, from his holy habitation to this accurſed earth, could any thing be expected from Heaven, but wrath and vengeance? And if no good could be expected that way, what way could it come? Sure if not from Heaven then from no Art: Yet from heaven our help is come, from whence it could not be looked for, even from him who was offended, and his juſtice engadged againſt man, that he might both ſatisfy juſtice and ſave man, that he might not wrong himſelf nor deſtroy man utterly, he ſends his onely begotten Son, equall with Himſelf in Majeſty and glory into the world in the ſtate of a ſervant, to accomplish mans ſalvation, and perform him ſatisfaction. Therefore Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners.

There were two grand impediments in the way of mans ſalvation, which made it impoſſible to man, one is Gods juſtice, another is mans ſin, theſe two behooved to be ſatisfied or removed e're there can be acceſſe to ſave a ſinner. The ſentence of divine juſtice is pronounced againſt all mankind. *Death paſt on all.* A ſentence of death and condemnation: Now when the righteouſneſſe and faithfulneſſe of God is engadged into this, how ſtrong a party do you think that muſt be. What power can break that priſon of a divine curſe, and take out a ſinner from under juſtice hand? Certainly there is no coming out till the uttermoſt farthing be payed that was owing, till compleat ſatisfaction be given to all wrongs. Now truely the Redemption of the ſoul had ceaſed for ever (its ſo precious that no creature can give any thing in exchange for it)

except

except Jesus Christ had come into the world, one that might be able to tread that wine-presse of wrath alone, and give his life a a ransome, in value farre above the soul, and pay the debt of sin that we were owing to God. And indeed he was furnished for this purpose, a person suted and fitted for such a work, a man to undertake it in our name, and God to perform it in his own strength. A man, that he might be made under the the Law, and be humbled even to the death of the crosse, that so he might obey the commandement, and suffer the punishment due to us, and all this was elevated beyond the worth of created actions or sufferings, by that divine nature; this perfumed all his humanity, and all done by it or in it, this put the stamp of divinity upon all, and imposed an infinite value upon the coyn of finite obedience and sufferings; And so in his own person by coming into the world, and acting and suffering in the place of sinners, he hath taken the first great impediment out of the way, taken down the high wall of divine justice which had enclosed round about the sinner, and satisfied all its demands by paying the price, so that there is nothing upon Gods part to accuse or condemn, to hinder or obstruct salvation.

But then there is an inner wall or dark dungeon of sin, into which the sinner is shut up, and reserved in chains of his own lusts, untill the time of everlasting darkneſſe, and when Heaven is opened by Christs death, yet this keeps a sinner from entering in. Therefore Jesus Christ who came himself into the world to satisfie Justice, and remove its plea, that there might be no obstruction from that airth, he sends out his powerfull Spirit with the Word, to deliver poor captive sinners, to break down the wall of ignorance and blindneſſe, to cast down the high Tower of wickedness and enimity against God, to take captive and chain our lusts, that keept us in bondage: And as he made Heaven accessible by his own personall obedience and sufferings, so he makes sinners ready and free to enter into that salva-

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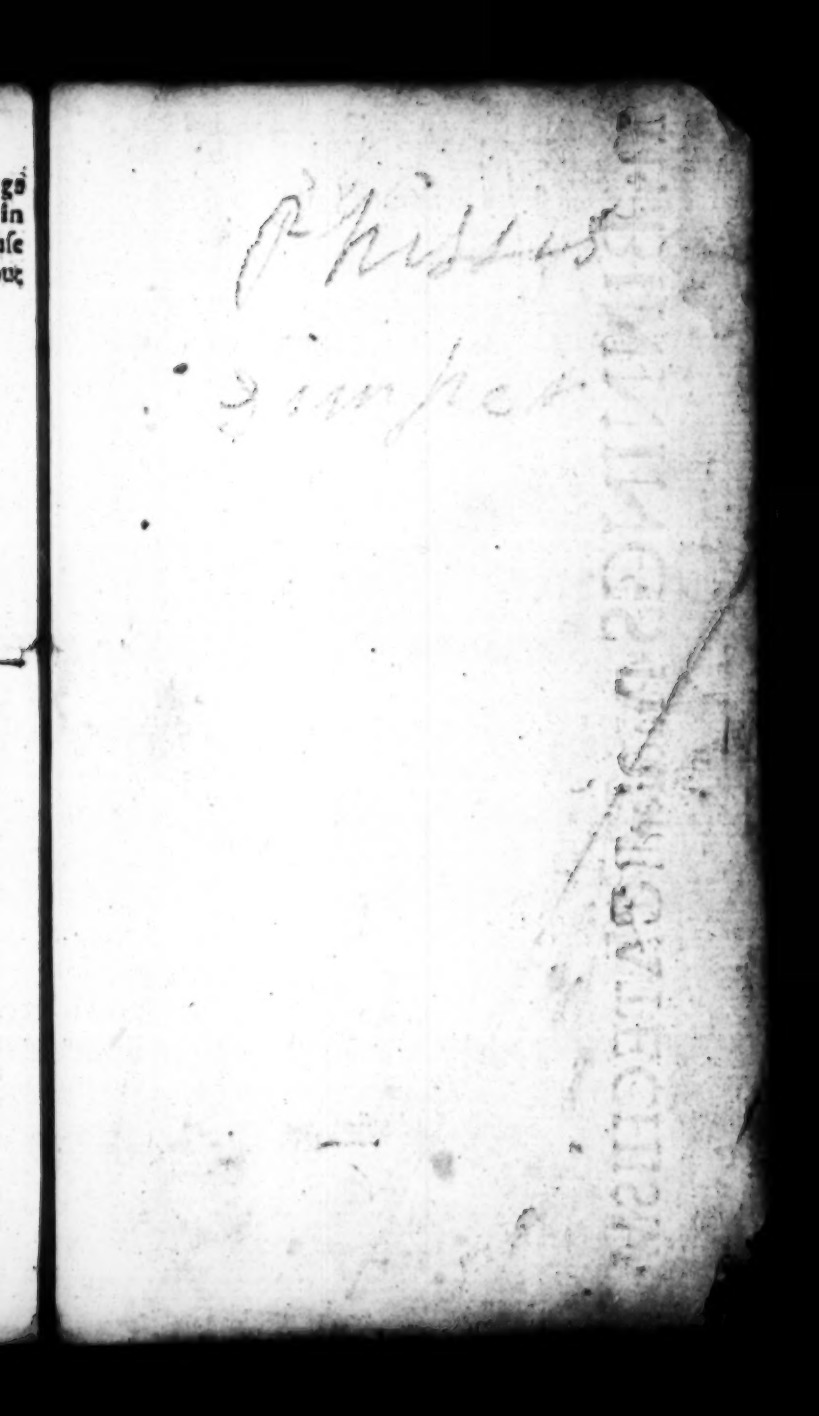
tion by his Spirits working in their persons. In the one he had, God as it were his partie, and him he hath satisfied so far, that there was a voice came from Heaven to testifie it, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*, and therefore in testimony of it, God raised him from the dead. In the other he hath Satan and mans wicked nature as his party, and these he must conquere and subdue, these he must overcome ere we can be saved, a strange busines indeed, and a great work, to bring such two opposite and distant parties together, a holy and just God, and a sinfull and rebellious creature, and to take them both as parties that he might reconcile both.

Now what do you think of this, my beloved? that such a glorious Person is come down from Heaven, for such a work as the salvation of sinners. I put no doubt it would be most acceptable unto you, if you knew your misery, and knowing your misery you could not but accept it, if you beleeved that it were true and faithfull. I find one of two the great obstruction in the way of souls receiving advantage by such glad tydings, either the absolute necessity and excellency of the Gospel is not considered, or the truth and reality of it is not believed. Men either do not behold the beauty of goodnes in it, or do not see the light of truth in it, either there is nothing discovered to engage their affections, or nothing seen to perswade their understandings. Therefore the Apostle sounds a Trumpet, as it were in the entry, before the publication of these glad news, and commends this unto all men as a true and faithfull saying, and as worthy of all acceptation. There is here the highest truth and certainty to satisfie the mind, *its a faithfull saying*, and there is here also the chiefest good to satiat the heart, *its worthy of all acceptation*. Now if you do really apprehend your lost and miserable estate, you cannot but behold that ravishing goodnes in it, and behold that you cannot till you see the other first: Whence is it, I pray you, that so many

souls

ſouls are never ſtirred with the propoſition of ſuch things in the Goſpel, that the riches and beauty of ſalvation in Jeſus Chriſt doth not once move them? Is it not becauſe there is no lively apprehenſion of their miſery without him.

FINIS.



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